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**CHARLES WESLEY
AND
THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT**

by
Neville Thomas Shepherd

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in
accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts
(Department of Theology and Religious Studies)
submitted September 1999**

87,700 words

ABSTRACT

Charles Wesley wrote about 8,900 hymns. Although only a small number are still sung, we can only study his doctrine of the atonement by looking at them all; and as we do so, it becomes clear that Wesley covered virtually all theories of the atonement. Thus, for him, Jesus is our substitute, but he is also our representative; his death was a ransom for sinners, and also a victory over death and the powers of darkness; he is our great High Priest, who offered his life as a sacrifice, who prays for us, and who cleanses us by his blood.

He differed from many of his contemporaries in proclaiming that Christ died for all; that the benefits of the atonement could not be received except through the work of the Holy Spirit; that the worshipper should experience a oneness with the sufferings of Christ, especially in the Communion Service; and that the righteousness which comes by faith must be a real - an imparted - righteousness and not simply an imputed one. Here, he came to differ from John in seeing it as gradual work, the change of our inner nature into love, which could never be completed in this life.

When we turn from comparisons with his contemporaries, we find Wesley apparently much influenced by the Church Fathers. Although his theology stresses the need for satisfaction, he is much more clear than Anselm that God provides this satisfaction himself. An intuitive thinker, he is at one with Luther in seeing God as a "hidden God" fully revealed only in the Cross. His references to God as dying on the Cross appeal to many modern theologians, but they are made in a soteriological context, whereas modern theologians want to apply them in a cosmic way as revealing the eternal nature of God.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr Sean Gill supervised me during my studies, and I am also very grateful to the Revd Timothy Macquiban, of Westminster College Oxford, for offering to consult with me. The late Dr Raymond George was stimulating in certain discussions I had with him, and I have also been encouraged by the Rev. Wilfrid Little. I have inevitably had to use libraries during my studies, and I am indebted to Miss Janet Henderson, of Wesley College Bristol, Mr Geoffrey Spittall, of the New Room, Bristol, Mr Martin Astell, of Westminster College, Oxford, and Mr Gareth Lloyd, the Archivist at the John Rylands Library, Manchester.

My wife Beryl has been both patient and helpful, and encouragement has come from my daughter, Dr Alison Salvesen, whose own research in Oxford has touched mine on the subject of Ephraem Syrus. To them this dissertation is dedicated.

Neville Shepherd
August 1999

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

This dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED: *N Shepherd*

DATE: *19 January 2000*

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CONVENTIONS

I have used the following conventions.

1. For pronouns relating to the Persons of the Trinity, I have used lower case (he, him, his, rather than He, Him, His). This is in accordance with modern usage, and it is worth noting that, while the Methodist Hymn Book (1933) used upper case, Wesley's Hymns (1877) used lower. The Wesleys themselves seem to have used upper case for the nominative and accusative, but lower for the genitive (He, Him, his). (S T Kimbrough notes, in editing *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, that he "usually capitalized the words "thee" and "thou" as forms of address to God, but he is not always consistent").¹
2. For past participles in hymns I have followed modern usage and amended the ending "'d" to "-ed": thus "displayed" rather than "display'd".
3. I have amended archaic spellings: Doddridge's "chearful" becomes "cheerful".
4. I have amended many words beginning with a capital to lower case, but when in doubt I have left the capital unaltered.
5. To make it quite clear whether I am quoting Wesley or another hymn writer, I have shown all hymns from other writers in Geneva nine-point font.
6. I have referred to hymns by Charles Wesley as follows:
 - a. Where the hymn is in *Hymns & Psalms*, I have used the *H&P* reference and dated it (generally in a footnote) by giving the original publication and its date (e.g. *SH* 1762). (For a list of abbreviations, please see the next page).
 - b. Where it is not in *H&P* but is in *The Methodist Hymn Book*, I have followed the same principle.
 - c. Where it is in neither, I have given its reference in *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, or *The Unpublished Verse of Charles Wesley*, as appropriate, and dated it by giving the original publication and its date (e.g. *SH* 1762).

¹*Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Volume I, pp 11-12.

List of Abbreviations

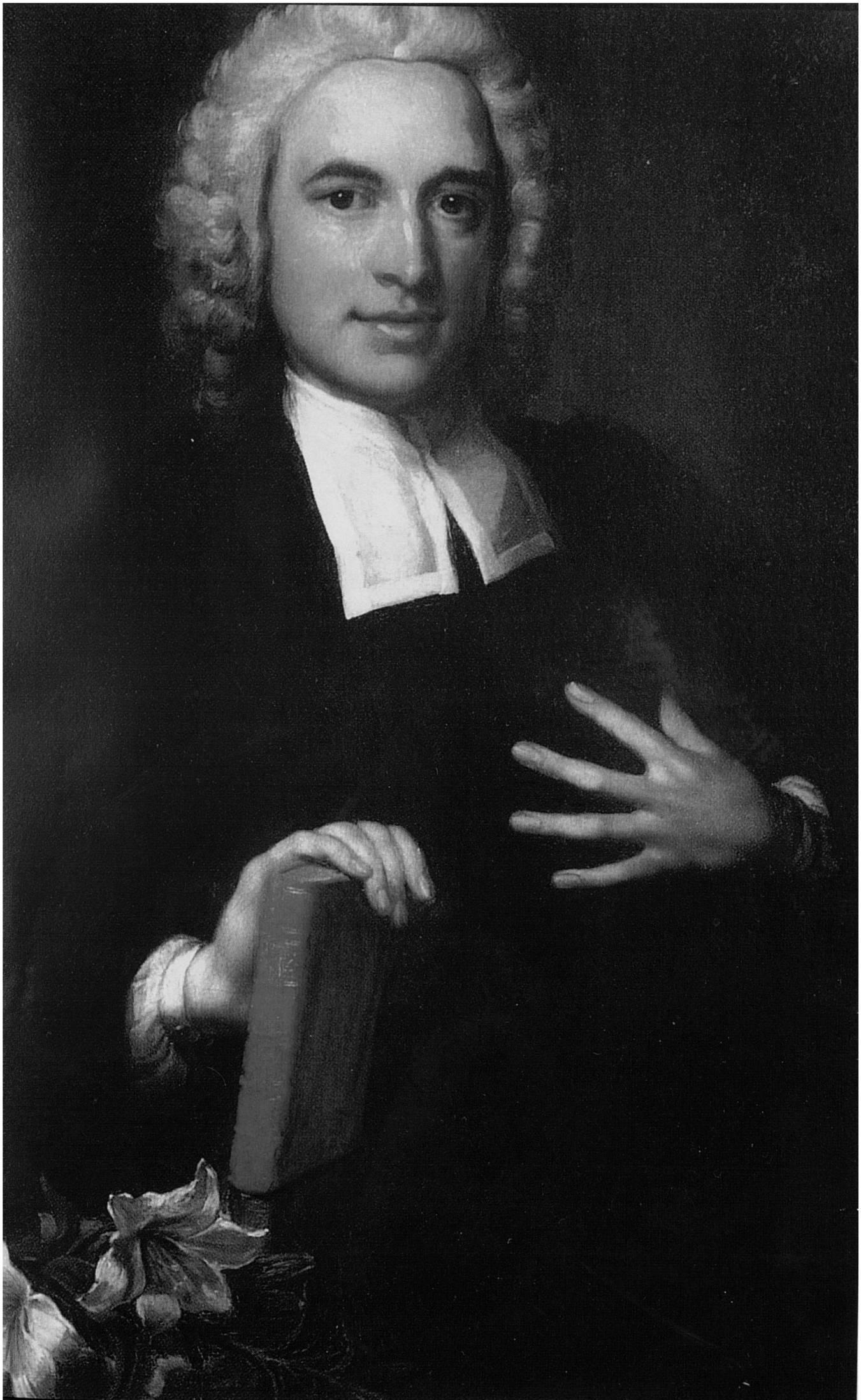
CUP	Cambridge University Press (place: Cambridge)
DLT	Darton, Longman & Todd
FH	<i>Hymns for the Use of Families</i> (1767)
H&P	<i>Hymns & Psalms</i> (1983)
H&SP	<i>Hymns & Sacred Poems</i> (1739, 1740, 1742, 1749)
HC	<i>Hymns for Children</i> (1763)
HGF	<i>Hymns for the Great Festivals, and Other Occasions</i> (1746)
HIAM	<i>Hymns of Intercession for all Mankind</i> (1758)
HLR	<i>Hymns for our Lord's Resurrection</i> (1746)
HoGEL	<i>Hymns on God's Everlasting Love</i> (1741 and 1742)
HoLS	<i>Hymns on the Lord's Supper</i> (1745)
HPT	<i>Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father</i> (1746)
HTTP	<i>Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution</i> (1750)
HNYD	<i>Hymns for New Year's Day</i> (1750)
KJV	King James ("Authorised") Version
MHB	<i>The Methodist Hymn Book</i> (1933)
NH	<i>Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord</i> (1744)
NIV	New International Version
OUP	Oxford University Press (place: Oxford)
PD	<i>Preparation for Death</i> (1772)
RH	<i>Hymns for those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ</i> (1747)
SH	<i>Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures</i> (1762)
SOED	<i>Shorter Oxford English Dictionary</i>
TH	<i>Trinity Hymns</i> (1767)
WH	<i>Wesley's Hymns</i> (1877)

Overleaf

The Revd. Charles Wesley
(1707-1788)

Portrait c. 1735, artist unknown

From a postcard reproduced by permission of the
Archives and History Committee of the Methodist Church



Overleaf

The Revd. Charles Wesley
(1707-1788)

Stained glass window at Wesley College, Bristol



1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 The broad approach of this thesis

What was Charles Wesley's doctrine of the Atonement? My interest in this and related questions has long been stimulated by some of his hymns that are still sung. Take, for instance, "God of unexampled grace" (*Hymns & Psalms* 166),¹ where verses 2 and 3 run:

2. Endless scenes of wonder rise
From² that mysterious tree,
Crucified before our eyes
Where we our Maker see;
Jesus, Lord, what hast thou done?
Publish we the death divine,
Stop, and gaze, and fall, and own
Was never love like thine!
3. Never love nor sorrow was
Like that my Saviour³ showed;
See him stretched on yonder cross,
And crushed beneath our load!
Now discern the Deity,
Now his heavenly birth declare;
Faith cries out: 'Tis he, 'tis he,
My God, that suffers there!

The atonement has often been represented as a man, a perfect man, enduring suffering and death to satisfy the justice of an angry God. Here, Wesley is proclaiming that it is God himself who dies on the cross. But to say that God dies can only be paradox. What exactly did Wesley mean, and is there any connection between his doctrine and the modern concept of the "Death of God"? Did his view of the atonement go wider than this, and was it in line with that of his contemporaries? More generally, has his theology any permanent value for the present?

This thesis sets out to examine, clarify, and subject to a critique Wesley's doctrine of the atonement by taking two different perspectives. Firstly, it attempts to place his thought within the context of his own age, and to see to what extent it was in line with the thought of his contemporaries, and how far it can be considered to be a creative expression of his own. Secondly, it explains the similarities and differences between Wesley's thought and that of modern theologians, and asks more generally whether his theology has any permanent value for us in the present.

This study is unusual in that it is based almost entirely on hymns.⁴ It is difficult - almost certainly impossible - to find any other writer where hymns constitute so large a part of his or her output. Wesley wrote about 8,900 hymns,⁵ and beside that his other writings (letters, journals and sermons) are inconsiderable.⁶ I am not by any means alone in using such material to write about his theology. Ernest J Rattenbury wrote books on *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*⁷ and *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*,⁸ while John R Tyson has written *Charles Wesley on Sanctification*,⁹ drawing almost exclusively from the hymns. In view of the sparseness of Wesley's other writings, it is inconceivable that studies of this kind could be made without almost entire reliance on the hymns. Conversely, it is difficult to think of any other writer where this would be the case. There is a comprehensive study of Isaac Watts by Selma L Bishop,¹⁰ but this does not attempt to reach the same depths of theological study as Rattenbury and Tyson; moreover, it is based on a corpus of only about 600 hymns. Rattenbury's books were pioneering studies but (as will be clear from his titles) were covering a wider field than the atonement, to which he exclusively devoted a mere 26 pages, and he quoted a mere 48 hymns.¹¹ Moreover, scholarship now demands a more penetrating approach than would have been thought necessary in the 1940s, and I have felt it appropriate in my last chapter to relate Wesley not only to the major theologians of the past, but to people like Moltmann who have raised questions which were hardly in issue when Rattenbury wrote.

Can hymns, in fact, be an adequate basis for a theological study? We have to bear in mind that they are (certainly in Wesley's case) outpourings of the heart, and as such may exaggerate the writer's considered beliefs. A detailed study on this point has been made by Teresa Berger.¹² Hymns fall within the definition of "Doxology" rather than "theology". "Doxology" she understands as "the explicit and implicit speech of praise, confession of faith, prayer, and thanksgiving, as directed to God for God's glorification".¹³ "The most noticeable character of doxology lies in the way it relates itself to God. Doxology is neither from or about God: rather it is directed to God."¹⁴ Hymns are not written for theological study but for the praise of God.¹⁵ Nevertheless, she is able (particularly in relation to individual themes in Wesley's hymns, such as assurance) to conclude in relation to theological study of hymns:

As long as this kind of interpretation is understood as theological reflection on doxological

material there are no problems. Theological reflection is possible on practically any kind of material, and doxological material is no exception. One must however be clear to draw the distinction between the theological method and the material to be studied: it needs to be stressed that the theological interpretation of doxological material does not itself become a doxological formulation, nor does doxological material through theological interpretation become a systematic theological formulation.¹⁶

The point has also been considered by Geoffrey Wainwright in *Doxology: A Systematic Theology*.¹⁷ A hymn, he writes, is praise; it is praise of God; it is the sung praise of God. A hymn that was not intended to praise God in any way would be idolatry. This does not mean, however, that doctrine will not enter into hymns, and he instances “Father, whose everlasting love”¹⁸ as “a powerful declaration of the universal scope of the atonement”.¹⁹ John Wesley’s Preface to the Collection of 1780 includes three motifs: doctrinal; existential; and the fusion of piety and poetry. The first of these Wainwright amplifies as “the major truths to whose verbal formulation scripture, tradition, reason and experience have all contributed in a complex interplay.”²⁰

It is in any case clear from the very large corpus which we have that Wesley’s hymns reflect a consistent theology. Not only are they consistent within themselves, but they correspond with what Wesley says in his surviving sermons. They also largely agree with the doctrines to be found in his brother John’s writings, with certain exceptions to which I shall draw attention. The American authority Richard P Heitzenrater writes:

Any discussion of Charles Wesley’s role in the development of Methodist theology immediately raises the question of how well hymns serve as a vehicle for expressing and transmitting theological ideas. There is no doubt poetry is Charles’s primary means of expressing his theology.²¹

One may of course follow this by asking whether Charles was in fact a hymn-writer first and a theologian second. In that case the hymns will express conventional doctrine - perhaps in a striking way - and be influential in bringing that doctrine to the nascent Methodist movement, but will not be worth serious study for their theology alone. Madeleine Forell Marshall and Janet Bell have something of this nature in mind when they write:

Wesley’s purpose was not the expressive *venturing* of feeling but rather the evangelical *direction* of feeling. Emotion, raised and controlled, would carry the singer to God. Passion was a means to a didactic end, and its expression was usually exemplary.²²

They admit that this is “a far from orthodox” view, but I do not think that we have to be “orthodox” to query it. Charles was certainly, in Myers-Briggs²³ terms, a “feeling” person, in contrast to John, who was a “thinking” person to the extent of being distinctly

unfeeling at times. When a Mr Combes testified to him of a fire within him which “diffused itself through every part”, Charles recounted, “We sang and shouted all the way to Oxford”.²⁴ The question is whether we can find a theology which is comprehensive and distinctive, the product of an intuitive thinker; and I shall attempt to show that we can, even if he does not break entirely new ground. Moreover, the sheer volume of Charles’s verse shows that he could not have expected to have more than a fraction of it published in hymn books. The early fire may have died down somewhat in his later years, but the earnestness still remains. In other words, he was writing in order to express his experience-centred theology, rather than as a didactic exercise.

A further point can be made here. Such distinctive doctrines as the early Methodists had were themselves based partly on religious experience. The Wesleys held orthodox beliefs, and in particular considered themselves faithful to the doctrines of the Church of England as expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles, but their stress on assurance, the role of the Holy Spirit, and sanctification owed a great deal to their own and their followers’ experiences. Charles’s hymns mirrored such experience, and also helped to shape it. I have commented on this particularly in Chapter 5.

1.2 What is Atonement?

Before we attempt to discuss Wesley’s doctrine, we must be clear what atonement means. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary shows that atone is a back-formation from atonement. The latter word was first used in 1513 and stems from the medieval Latin word *adunamentum*, “making one” or “reconciling”. It is recorded as having been used in the theological sense of “reconciliation or restoration of friendly relations between God and sinners” by Tyndale in 1526; in 1611, as meaning the propitiation of God by expiation of sin. The entry records that atonement “is variously used by theologians in the sense of *reconciliation*, *propitiation*, *expiation*, but is not so applied in any version of the New Testament”.²⁵

The point is of some importance because we have to decide whether we are referring to reconciliation, or merely to propitiation and expiation. Reconciliation can be taken to mean the restoration of friendly relations in its fullest sense, whereas propitiation and expiation refer only to possible means by which this is achieved. It has been pointed out

by John Macquarrie²⁶ that atonement and incarnation were themselves regarded as virtually synonymous in the early Church:

Frequently... when one speaks of "reconciliation", or still more of "atonement", in Christian theology, there is a tendency to think almost exclusively of Christ's death. The cross does, of course, occupy the central place in the doctrine of the atonement, but the cross cannot be understood apart from the life which it ended. Already in the New Testament we can see the difference in emphasis between St John with his stress on the incarnation, and St Paul, with his stress on the atoning death... Some of the early Greek fathers virtually equate incarnation and atonement. In Western theology, however, it is the death that atones, and in St Anselm's famous theory, it is the death alone that constitutes the "satisfaction".

Wesley is, in effect, speaking of atonement in the very wide sense used by the Greek fathers when he writes:

He deigns in flesh to appear,
Widest extremes to join;
To bring our vileness near,
And make us all divine:
And we the life of God shall know,
For God is manifest below.²⁷

I propose to use atonement in its wider sense, as (literally) the "at-one-ment" of God and ourselves; however, in accordance with normal usage, I shall confine it to the context of the Cross. Thus, when Wesley writes:

Fill me with all the life of love;
In mystic union join
Me to thyself, and let me prove
The fellowship divine.²⁸

he is referring to an "at-one-ment", and, *in so far as it is achieved through the Cross of Christ*, it is relevant to this present paper.

In her book *Travelling In*, Monica Furlong describes an experience which was instrumental in leading her to faith in God:

I was aware of being regarded by love, of being wholly accepted, accused, forgiven, all at once. The joy of it was the greatest I had ever known in my life. I felt I had been born for this moment and had marked time till it occurred.²⁹

This can be described as an archetypal religious experience, and there are obvious similarities to that of Isaiah in the Temple. For Isaiah sees the Lord's glory and simultaneously feels himself "a man of unclean lips, dwelling among a people of unclean lips". But as a seraph touches his mouth with a live coal, he finds his guilt taken away, and his sin atoned for.³⁰

Frances Young aptly comments in her book *Can These Dry Bones Live?*:

As Rudolf Otto discerned, being in the presence of the Holy One effects atonement in itself. For

that experience is a paradoxical one: on the one hand, it is an overwhelming sense of unworthiness, of creatureliness, of being polluted and needing to hide; on the other hand, it is a profound sense of purging and renewal, of gracious acceptance and consecration. Atonement is effected by the very presence of God.³¹

These are essentially once-in-a-lifetime experiences. I infer from the way in which they are described that neither Monica Furlong nor Isaiah had seen those experiences repeated. But might it be that the Cross encapsulates them in such a way that their characteristics are constantly before us? That as we "survey the wondrous Cross" we feel this "sense of unworthiness... of being polluted", but simultaneously God's "purging and renewal" and his "gracious acceptance and consecration"? And therefore, having the true nature of God laid before us – "Here his whole name appears complete", writes Isaac Watts³² – we experience atonement. As Jürgen Moltmann puts it, "The human God who encounters man in the crucified Christ involves man in a realistic divinization (*theiosis*)".³³

That the Cross has brought men and women to God, convicting them of sin yet at the same time assuring them of pardon, has been true throughout the history of the Church. And we could leave it there, simply accepting it as a work of the Holy Spirit or treating the cross, in the language of the psychologist Carl Jung, as "the supremely efficient symbol" of our deliverance.³⁴ Yet we are bound to ask: How exactly does it work? And as long as we allow a place for mystery, for an area which our theories cannot cover, it is a legitimate question. To that we now turn, reviewing briefly the main approaches which have appealed to the Church at various times.

A preliminary word of caution is necessary here, for we shall look in vain (as far as the first thousand years are concerned - in other words, until the time of Anselm) for a logically coherent doctrine. Frances Young has aptly commented that the Church Fathers "used a vast range of imaginative symbols and failed to produce a doctrine or theory of atonement, while carrying definitions of the Trinity to extreme niceties".³⁵ She says:

The vast majority of Christians in the early Church, as indeed the majority today, adopted traditional patterns of imagery and language without any real appreciation of the contradictions in them. God is love; God is angry. God is ultimately responsible for everything; the devil is responsible for evil. God sent his Son to overcome evil; God was placated by his Son's sacrifice.³⁶

The first main theory of the atonement is found in the idea of *Victory over the powers of darkness*. This was an idea which particularly appealed to the early Church, though it was revived in this century by Gustav Aulén, particularly in his book *Christus Victor*

(1931). To it can be added the idea of the Cross as *Ransom*, since the victory referred to was often seen as secured through a ransom (perhaps one given to the devil).

The second main theory is found in the idea of Jesus as *Priest* and the Cross as *Sacrifice*. This draws particularly on the imagery of the Letter to the Hebrews.

The third main theory is found in the idea of Jesus as *Substitute*, providing satisfaction to God; it is associated with Anselm, but has been particularly prevalent in Protestantism.

The fourth main theory is found in the idea of Jesus as *Representative*. We shall find that this has been present in the early Church, but has had a particular appeal to modern theologians.

The fifth main theory is that of *Moral Influence*, the doctrine that the main purpose of the Cross is to display God's love with such power as to turn our hearts to him. Many would in fact deny the right of this theory to be here at all. If we are searching essentially for an "objective" or "transactional" approach, then this is not it. "We call a theologian a supporter of the Moral Influence Theory", the late Rev Raymond George wrote to me, "if that is the *only* theory that he holds". We might be tempted to conclude that this is, in truth, no theory at all, but merely a reductionist approach to the cross; something which sees the atonement as existing only in our reaction to the death of Christ, just as some theologies see God as existing only as a concept of the human mind. That would however be to discount the power of the cross to effect a radical conversion of spirit; furthermore, those who espouse this theory may continue to accept important aspects of other theories. "Moral Influence" does not easily fit into precise categories of atonement, or into Charles Wesley's thought, but in so far as it is acknowledged to be the work of the Holy Spirit it will be covered in Chapter 5.2.

Because all of these theories of atonement appear, to a greater or less degree, in Wesley's hymns, I have planned this dissertation on the same lines by dealing with each theory in turn; I have however supplemented this by referring to distinctive Methodist emphases which do not relate to any one theory. At the end, I shall be comparing Wesley's doctrines with those of figures like Anselm who had a particular influence on the Church's thinking, and also with those of certain modern theologians.

More recently, a new way of looking at the cross has emerged. Tom Smail, in his recent book *Windows on the Cross*, refers to a question posed by Jürgen Moltmann.

The question with which Moltmann comes to the cross of Jesus [in *The Crucified God*] shows that there has been a great reversal of approach from the traditional concerns that we have been examining in previous chapters. They asked, "How can the ways of sinful humanity be put right before a God of holy love?" whereas Moltmann is voicing the modern question, "How can the ways of a God of holy love be justified before a suffering humanity?" In the one case Christ stands to plead our cause before the judgement seat of God, in the other he stands to plead God's cause before the judgement seat of an abused and tortured humanity. In the one case we are the villains and in the other the victims.³⁷

I shall not be considering it as a separate theory of the atonement (it is, not surprisingly, radically different from Charles Wesley's way of thought), but I have referred to it in Chapter 2.3, "Did God Die on the Cross?", and I shall also look at Moltmann's approach in more detail in Chapter 7.

So much for the historical background against which we can set Wesley's hymns. But we must add five emphases which are distinctive in the Methodist revival and which are relevant to Wesley's doctrine of the atonement without being specific to any one theory. The first of these is the emphasis that Christ died for all, that atonement was not limited to the elect as claimed by the Calvinists. The second is that atonement cannot be received by the believer without a work of the Holy Spirit. The third emphasis, which follows on from the experience of the Holy Spirit, is that the atonement cannot be regarded as simply a past event, but is to be experienced in the present. The fourth is that justification is by faith but involves a real and not purely an imputed righteousness, though this is to be distinguished from the continuing work of sanctification which follows. These emphases set the scene for the fifth, what John Wesley termed "the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists", ³⁸ namely sanctification, and I discuss how far Charles considered that this was itself achieved through the atonement.

The way in which the main theories and theological terms have been dealt with in this paper is shown below.

	<u>Main Subject</u>	<u>Allied terms</u>	<u>Chapter</u>
END	Atonement	Reconciliation	1
MEANS	Substitution	Expiation Propitiation Wrath	2.1
	Substitution - did God die on the cross?		2.2
	Representative	Recapitulation Solidarity	2.3
	Victory and Ransom	Price, debt	3
	Sacrifice	Priesthood Sympathy Intercession Blood	4
METHODIST EMPHASES	Christ died for all	Election Predestination Reprobation	5.1
	The Holy Spirit	Assurance	5.2
	Experiencing the cross in the present		5.3
	Christ, our Righteousness	Justification	5.4
	Perfection	Holiness Sanctification	6

1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism

Wesley's hymns are based on experience, and above all what he experienced on and after 21 May 1738. This foundation of experience is true of most other great hymn writers, just as it is true of scripture itself; for what we find there is not some carefully formulated and consistent doctrine but the outpourings of experience. St Paul, says P T Forsyth, was "not a theologian but an experience preacher".³⁹ It is therefore wrong to construe the pages of the New Testament as if they were pages of the Taxes Acts. What appears in Paul's letters, for instance, cannot be properly understood except by someone whose mind and experience are on the same wavelength. Unless you can cry, "I know what he means!", you *don't* know what he means. It follows also that the many metaphors used of the Atonement (such as sacrifice and blood) must be viewed as

attempts to express what is fundamentally inexpressible, and not pushed to the limits of definition. Similarly, Frances Young is careful to distinguish between *image* and *explanation*.⁴⁰ There are all too frequent examples in the history of the Church of ideas forged in the heat of impassioned experience being reduced to legalistic formulae. It seems that Luther was thus misrepresented by Melancthon.⁴¹

Wesley's hymns, therefore, are not primarily written to inculcate doctrinal belief, in the style of Newman's "Firmly I believe and truly",⁴² but to reflect what he himself had experienced in, and following, what is usually referred to as his "conversion" in May 1738.⁴³ What is particularly interesting is that they also reflect the experiences of a great many of the early Methodists. In a few cases⁴⁴ their experience actually resulted in the hymn; in many more, it either paralleled the hymn or was inspired by it. We can certainly say that, time and time again, Methodists expressed their own feelings in the words of Charles. He was voicing his individual experience, but he was also voicing a collective experience in a way which seems to be unique in British Christianity. Much more attention has been focused on his brother, and John's organisational genius was unquestionably necessary if Methodism were to put down roots. But the way in which the Methodist societies were nurtured by Charles's hymns cannot be underestimated. A Roman Catholic layman has aptly said that "Methodism was a choir organised by John to sing Charles's hymns".⁴⁵ Albert Outler has written:

The brothers Wesley set great store by the fact that their people sang the same doctrine in their hymns as they heard and read in their sermons. Accordingly, the most copious source of quotations in the written sermons, beside the Scripture itself, is from the succession of hymn collections provided for the Methodist people. Here, Charles's contribution to the Revival was unique; far more of his hymns have been sung by more Christians (and not just Methodists alone) than any sermon of John's has ever been read.⁴⁶

And we can quote also A S Gregory:

Although not officially recognised as doctrinal standards in the Methodist Church of Great Britain, it can be claimed that Charles Wesley's hymns are nevertheless an authentic expression of the distinctive Methodist theological and devotional emphases, and in that sense they play a role in the life of the denomination unknown for hymns in any other church.⁴⁷

Edward Houghton says of Charles "He is the standard hymn-writer of evangelical experience, with its interlocking principal parts of revealed truth and gracious experience"; while he did not set out to write doctrine as such, "doctrine it is, in the direct language of experience". He instances the lines:

Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;

They pour effectual prayers,
 They strongly speak for me:
 "Forgive him, O forgive!" they cry,
 "Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"
 The Father hears him pray,
 His dear anointed one;
 He cannot turn away
 The presence of his Son:
 His Spirit answers to the blood,
 And tells me I am born of God.⁴⁸

"Here", he continues, "is the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of the atonement, and touching both the doctrine of the high priesthood of Christ. But it is all Wesley's experience as he writes, and only so did he write it".⁴⁹

To the early Methodists, the use of Charles's hymns was second nature. They used them to describe their justification and sanctification, and there is a striking example in the life of the celebrated John Fletcher of Madeley (1729-1785), who was for a time viewed as John Wesley's likely successor. Fletcher tells us that:

I had proposed to receive the Lord's Supper the following Sunday; I therefore returned to my room, and looked out a sacramental hymn. I learned it by heart, and prayed over it many times, sometimes with heaviness enough, at others with some devotion, intending to repeat it at the table...

The Rev. J Benson, who quotes this in his *Life*,⁵⁰ continues:

So far we have Mr Fletcher's account, written with his own hand. To this I add what Mrs Fletcher says she heard him speak concerning his experience at this time; viz., he still continued to plead with the Lord to take more full possession of his heart, and sought with unwearied assiduity to receive a brighter manifestation of God's love to his soul: till one day, as he was in earnest prayer, lying prostrate on his face before the Lord, he had a view, by faith, of our Saviour hanging and bleeding on the tree; and, at the same time, these words were applied with power to his heart:

Seized by the rage of sinful men,
 I see Christ bound, and bruised, and slain;
 'Tis done, the martyr dies:
 His life, to ransom ours, is given;
 And lo! The fiercest fire of heaven
 Consumes the sacrifice.
 He suffers both from men and God;
 He bears the universal load
 Of guilt and misery!
 He suffers to reverse our doom;
 And lo, my Lord is here become
 The Bread of life to me! ⁵¹

A sermon by one of John Wesley's best-known preachers, Christopher Hopper (1722-1802), which is quoted in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1794 contains the following references to hymns by Charles Wesley:

"Jesus, the Lamb of God hath bled" (8 lines), and "Can these avert the wrath of

God" (4 lines), from "Wherewith, O God, shall I draw near" ⁵²

"With all who for redemption groan" (6 lines; verse 5 of "Expand thy wings, celestial dove" ⁵³

"We ask the gift of righteousness" (8 lines). ⁵⁴

The novelist George Eliot, in *Adam Bede*, makes Dinah Morris conclude her sermon with a verse from one of Charles's hymns, "Thy ceaseless unexhausted love":

Its streams the whole creation reach,
So plenteous is the store,
Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore.⁵⁵

Likewise, Charlotte Brontë in *Shirley* describes a Methodist service and its selection of hymns culminating with "a climax of noise and zeal": "The roof of the chapel did *not* fly off; which speaks volumes in praise of its solid slating".⁵⁶ Both writers know their Wesley hymns and, judged by other accounts, are describing typical scenes.

I shall be referring to more examples in due course, especially in Chapter 5.3, "Experiencing the Cross in the Present" (and quoting again from *Adam Bede*). But nowhere was the use of hymns more striking than on the death-bed. When the dying William Barton was asked whether he would like a hymn sung, he replied, "A thousand if you please!"; his last words were, "O what shall I do, my Saviour to praise".⁵⁷ On her deathbed, a Mrs Walker sang many hymns, including the following verses:⁵⁸

"O what hath Jesus bought for me!" (from "O let this feeble body frail")⁵⁹

"Not a doubt can arise" (verse 5 of "All praise to the Lamb")⁶⁰. (When a Mr King likewise sang this on his deathbed, the account adds: "In that moment the Sun of Righteousness broke in upon his soul in a most remarkable manner. The glorious Lord was unto him as a place of broad rivers. His joy was full, and his cup ran over").⁶¹

"Him eye to eye we there shall see (from "God of all consolation")⁶²

"I ride on the sky/ (Freely justified I!)/ Nor envied Elijah his seat/ My soul mounted higher/ In a chariot of fire,/ And the moon it was under my feet". (From "How happy are they"; Wesley actually wrote, "I rode on the sky").⁶³ Several others sang this on their deathbeds; the fact that it is undistinguished, and in a section "for one fallen from grace" suggests how well they remembered their hymns.

“My soul breaks out in strong desire/ The perfect bliss to prove” (from “Jesus hath died, that I might live”).⁶⁴

A Mrs S Bumstead, dying in childbirth, sang Wesley’s “Come on, my partners in distress”,⁶⁵ Watts’s “I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath”, and four other hymns “with unspeakable rapture”.⁶⁶ When Wesley prayed with others around the deathbed of one Alexander White, he was so uplifted that he began the hymn, “O what a soul-transporting sight”.⁶⁷

In short, then, these hymns became a focal point of Methodism. They resulted from Charles’s own experience (and sometimes from his observation of other people’s), they celebrated and affirmed those experiences, they led Methodists to expect particular experiences, and they strengthened them in the trials of life, particularly the ordeal of dying.

1.4 What are the Sources?

Charles Wesley was almost exclusively a writer of hymns; these, and the problem of authorship (that is, distinguishing his hymns from those of John) will be discussed shortly. However, there are three other sources to consider beforehand: his sermons, his journal, and his letters.

First, then, his sermons, which can be dealt with briefly. There is in existence a collection entitled *Sermons by the Late Rev. Charles Wesley* (London: J Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1816). This comprises thirteen sermons, but unfortunately it is of limited interest, for two reasons. The first is that seven of them have recently been shown⁶⁸ to have been copied by Charles from his brother John’s manuscripts. Moreover, doubts remain over the rest.⁶⁹ It is of course true that copying implies approval, but clearly they will not be as authoritative as if they were Charles’s own compositions. In the second place, all thirteen are early in date, relating to the period 1735-1736; one predates his ordination. They are therefore not representative of that period following the experience in May 1738 which inspired his hymns. On the other hand there are six sermons genuinely by Charles in a fairly recent publication of the Wesley Historical Society;⁷⁰ these are ascribed to the period *after* May 1738, and have therefore been given the title *Charles Wesley’s Earliest Evangelical Sermons*. They therefore supply a valuable insight into his essential preaching and doctrines. This is not however the last word on

the subject, as Dr Kenneth Newport, who is currently doing research on it, lists fourteen sermons as having been composed by Charles, of which four definitely predate May 1738, five definitely follow it, and the remaining five cannot be dated with confidence. He also notes that the authorship of one of the undated sermons is still uncertain. In addition, there are nine sermons preached by Charles which cannot be ascribed to him. Of these, four predate May 1738, one definitely follows it, and four are undated. Dr Newport comments on the change of approach after May 1738: "the sermons do certainly suggest that his experience of salvation, and his homiletic expression of it, underwent a definite shift"; though an emphasis on good works remains, the soul-searching has gone.⁷¹

More than this we do not have, for Charles discarded sermon notes almost entirely on 11 February 1739.⁷² "Nowhere in his Journal do we find John's oft-repeated entry 'writ sermon'".⁷³ However, we possess an extremely interesting account by Joseph Williams of Kidderminster of the manner and content of a sermon preached by Charles on 7 October 1739:

Next day I came to Bristol, and learning in the afternoon, that Mr C. Wesley was preaching in the field, I went to hear him. I found him standing on a table-board, in an erect posture, with his eyes and hands lifted up to heaven in prayer, surrounded by, I guess, more than a thousand people; some few of them fashionable persons, but most of them of the lower ranks of mankind. I know not how long he had been engaged in that service before my coming, after which he continued in scarce a quarter of an hour; but during that time he prayed with uncommon fervency, fluency, and variety of proper expressions. He then preached about an hour in such a manner as I scarce ever heard a man preach. Though I have heard many a finer sermon, according to the common taste or acceptation of sermons, yet I think that I never heard any man discover such evident signs of a vehement desire, or labour so intensely to convince his hearers that they were all by nature in a sinful, lost, undone state: that, notwithstanding there was a possibility of their salvation, through faith in Christ; and that for this end our sins were imputed to him, or he was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, (that is, had no sin of his own,) and this in order that his righteousness might be imputed, as it certainly will, to as many as will believe on him. And he told them, that none were excepted but such as refused to come to Christ as lost, perishing, yea, as condemned sinners, and trust in him alone (that is, in his meritorious righteousness and atoning sacrifice) for pardon and salvation: that this is the method Infinite Wisdom hath chosen for reconciling the world unto himself, and that whosoever believeth on him shall certainly receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. All this was backed by many texts of Scripture, which he explained and illustrated; and afterwards, by a variety of the most forcible methods, arguments, and expostulations, did he invite, allure, quicken, and labour, if it were possible, to compel all and each of his hearers to believe on Christ for salvation. He showed how great a change such faith in Christ would produce in the whole man, or how great a change would accompany it: that every man who is in Christ, (that is, believes in him unto salvation,) is a new creature; hath a thorough change wrought in all his powers and faculties: - he is not the same man as he was. His will is under a new direction, and his affections run in quite different channels. He now loves God over all, to whom by nature he had a rooted aversion, &c. Nor did he fail to inform them, how ineffectual their faith would be to justify them, unless it wrought by love, purified their hearts, and was productive of good works, even all the fruits of obedience. For though he cautioned them with the utmost care, not to attribute any merit to their own performances, nor in the least degree to rest on any works of their own, yet he

thoroughly apprized them, that *that* is but a dead faith which was not operative, and productive of all the good in their power, in obedience to God.

This, as I remember, was the scope of his discourse, wherein, with uncommon fervour, he acquitted himself as an ambassador of Christ, beseeching them, in his name, and praying them, in his stead, to be reconciled to God. And although he used no notes, nor had anything in his hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich, copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety, that I could not observe any thing incoherent or inanimate through the whole performance, which he concluded with singing, prayer, and the usual benediction.⁷⁴

Williams is a fulsome writer, but to judge by the evidence of Charles's written sermons, an accurate one. He relates that afterwards he went to a religious society (in other words, a devotional meeting) where Charles "expounded great part of John, xiith chap. in a most sweet, savoury, spiritual manner". "But never, sure, did I hear such praying; never did I see or hear such evident marks of fervency in the service of God!" He describes the response of his hearers thus:

Such evident marks of a lively, fervent devotion, I was never able to witness to before. If there be such a thing as heavenly music upon earth, I heard it there. If there be such an enjoyment, such an attainment, as heavenly music upon earth, numbers in that society seemed to possess it. As for my own part, I do not remember my heart to have been so elated in divine love and praise, as it was there and then, for many years past, if ever: and an affecting sense and savour thereof abode in my mind many weeks after.

The deep effect which Charles's preaching had on his hearers is confirmed by others. John Nelson, one of the foremost early itinerants, said: "The Lord was with him in such a manner that the pillars of hell seemed to tremble; many that were famous for supporting the devil's kingdom fell to the ground while he was preaching, as if they had been thunderstruck"; and another itinerant, John Valton, tells how "his word was with power and I thought my Saviour was at hand, never being so sensibly affected under a discourse before".⁷⁵ A Mrs Ratcliffe from Bath was converted by one of Charles's hymns after hearing him preach. Though she returned home full of despair, she opened the hymn book at the lines "Who is the trembling sinner" and then felt assured of God's forgiveness:⁷⁶ an instance of how preaching and hymn-writing can complement each other.

Secondly, the journal: like his brother, Charles kept one, but it is much less well-known, and is difficult to obtain. Moreover, it is much shorter, for though it begins in 1736 (the year after John's), it runs only to 1756, and most of the entries after 1 September 1751 have been lost. The only complete edition is that edited by Thomas Jackson (two volumes, John Mason Publisher, 1849; there is however a reprint by Baker Book House in 1980). The subject matter is similar to that of John's, namely the work of

God which he saw through preaching and Christian fellowship, but there is a warmth and immediacy of experience which we do not find in his brother: I have already referred to Charles's journal entry "We sang and shouted all the way to Oxford",⁷⁷ which would find no parallels in John's.

Thirdly, the letters: and whereas there are eight published volumes of John's letters (including about a hundred to Charles), few of Charles's own are accessible to the ordinary reader. An article in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* for 1989/90 states that Frank Baker prepared over 600 letters by him over forty years previously - and they were still awaiting publication.⁷⁸ They have however been largely transcribed by the John Rylands Library, Manchester; being confined very often to mundane matters, their value is limited, but I have referred to them occasionally in this thesis.

Charles was an extraordinarily prolific writer of hymns, even in his later years. Henry Moore⁷⁹ wrote of the period 1784-86 (and we remember that Charles died on 29 March 1788):

When he was nearly fourscore...he rode every day (clothed for winter even in summer) a little horse, grey with age. When he mounted, if a subject struck him, he proceeded to expand, and put it in order. He would write a hymn thus given him on a card (kept for the purpose) with his pencil, in shorthand. Not infrequently, he has come to our house in the City Road, and having left the pony in the garden in front, he would enter, crying out "Pen and ink! Pen and Ink!" These being supplied, he wrote the hymn he had been composing. When this was done, he would look around on those present, and salute them with much kindness, ask after their health, give out a short hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity.⁸⁰

Frank Baker believes that the high point of activity had been in the years 1762-66, when he wrote no fewer than 6,248 scriptural hymns, an average of 1,250 a year.⁸¹ They were written, says John R Tyson, "in the midst of a frantic public life that often included four or five sermons and extensive travel each day".⁸² It is worthy of note that most of those we sing now date from his earlier periods. Frank Baker has shown that, of the 156 Wesley hymns in the 1983 book, *Hymns & Psalms*, 96 were written during his first decade of activity (1739-1748), 35 during his second (1749-1758), 25 during his third (1759-1768), and none at all in his fourth and fifth decades (1769-1788).⁸³ Thus only 25 of the figure of 6,248 just mentioned are known to the present-day Methodist. Baker reckons that fewer than 15% of the 5,000 written during his last quarter of a century were even published.⁸⁴

The reason for the neglect of the later hymns is not, so far as I can see, a decline in quality. Clearly an output of 1,250 a year will contain a lot of dross or purely ephemeral subjects, but there are also hymns of real literary and devotional quality. It is worth remarking that *Hymns and Songs*, a supplement to the Methodist Hymn Book published in 1969, included among its 104 hymns 6 by Charles Wesley, of which 5 had been neglected not merely by MHB but from 1780 onwards; all have been retained in *Hymns & Psalms* (as numbers 35, 188, 583, 621, 622 and 759). However, it is difficult to break new ground on the familiar themes of unbelief, repentance, forgiveness, justification and sanctification; and faced with the need to illustrate his doctrines, one is embarrassed by an almost inexhaustible supply. We can understand why new hymns were not introduced into the book when the old ones were still sung with delight. Moreover, Charles was in spirit a thoroughgoing Anglican who wrote many of his hymns for the Church's year. As Tyson puts it, "they were written to be sung as Invocations, Invitations, and Benedictions to his preaching services and often treated the same biblical passage as the sermon".⁸⁵ Later Methodists, on the other hand, had little interest in the Church's year, being more concerned with the evangelical themes of repentance, conversion, backsliding, justification and sanctification (as indeed the contents lists of successive hymn books show). It could well be that a review of his hymns would find many suitable for the Christian calendar, though obviously the language is increasingly dated.

In order to discuss Charles's hymns fully, we need to know the full extent of the corpus, and distinguish those he wrote from those of John. Let it be said straight away that we do not know precisely how many hymns and poems he wrote. The *Companion to Hymns and Psalms* estimated 6,500;⁸⁶ John R Tyson, in *Charles Wesley: A Reader* says:

The numerical calculation of Charles's hymns runs from a high of 9,000 down to a low of 3,000 - if one excludes the lyric poems. The median estimate reaches about 7,300 hymns.⁸⁷

Three years earlier, in *Charles Wesley on Sanctification* (1986), he had referred to "the 5,100 published and 1,200 unpublished later hymns (post-1749) that can assuredly be attributed to Charles Wesley" and to "nearly half a hundred hymns of pre-1749 vintage that can historically be traced to his hand" (he proposed to leave out of account the remaining pre-1749 hymns; see below). An American publication estimates that Charles "authored upward of 8,900 hymns - of which approximately 300 have found their way

into English congregational use".⁸⁸ Frank Baker, in *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, inclines to a similar figure:

I have carefully read through, not only the 4,600 poems which he himself published, and the 3,000 which were published posthumously, but over 1,300 so far unpublished, a total of over 180,000 lines of verse.⁸⁹

Elsewhere he says that he has read 8,989 of his poems.⁹⁰ (The 1,300 "so far unpublished" now appear in a publication by Kimbrough and Beckerlegge;⁹¹ their figures are virtually identical). The word "poems" is not particularly significant here as there is, in general, little difference between the poems and the hymns. Baker goes on to say that after defining a hymn as "a lyrical poem with a mainly religious content", one would only disqualify "the few hundreds of his 9,000 poems which are not even faintly religious".⁹² (Wesley himself entitled his largest collection *Short Hymns on Selected Passages of Holy Scripture*, and there are very few verses outside such collections that we could call poems rather than hymns.) The problem is not helped because we do not always know exactly what to count. For instance, the hymn "When quiet in my house I sit"⁹³ was originally four one-verse hymns which were combined by John into a single hymn in 1780.⁹⁴ From the evidence above, we can nevertheless conclude that the corpus amounts to between 8,000 and 9,000 hymns and religious poems. A great many of these, as one might expect, are hymns and poems written for a particular occasion and of little value to this present study; nevertheless, it is surprising how many remain relevant. Taking *Poetical Works* Volume V as a not untypical source, 42% are potentially relevant.⁹⁵ Bernard Lord Manning wrote with only a little exaggeration when he said, "He is always at Calvary; no other place in the universe matters".⁹⁶

The hymns written for enduring public worship appeared in a number of collections. Even before his return from Georgia, John had published *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, though it did not include any by Charles. A second edition appeared in 1738, on his return, and again there were none by Charles; but in 1741 a third edition was produced, this time with 38 new hymns, of which 23 were by one or other of the Wesleys.⁹⁷ However, in the meantime John had also produced three editions of *Hymns & Sacred Poems*, in 1739, 1740 and 1742, all including hymns by Charles, and a further edition appeared in 1749. Other compilations followed: *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love* (1741 and 1742), *Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord* (1744), *Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution* (1750), *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), *Hymns of Petition*

and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father (1746), *Hymns for the Great Festivals, and Other Occasions* (1746), *Hymns for our Lord's Resurrection* (1746), *Hymns for those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* (1747), *Hymns for New Year's Day* (1750), *Hymns of Intercession for all Mankind* (1758), *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* (1762), *Hymns for Children* (1763), *Hymns for the Use of Families* (1767), *Trinity Hymns* (1767), and *Preparation for Death* (1772). Many of these hymns were consolidated in the 1780 *Collection*, which became the standard hymn book for Methodists. It was preserved nearly a century later in *Wesley's Hymns* (1877), though some additional hymns by Charles were added,⁹⁸ and many by other writers: out of 1008 hymns, 718 were by the Wesleys.

The main source for Wesley's hymns and poems has, since 1868, been *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*. This runs to 13 volumes and comprises 7600 hymns and poems. Frank Baker says that it omits "over 1,300 poems available only in manuscript".⁹⁹ However, in 1992 Oliver A Beckerlegge and S T Kimbrough Jr produced *Previously Unpublished Works by Charles Wesley*, in three volumes, comprising the 1,300 just referred to.

The question must arise, in considering Charles Wesley's hymns, whether they are correctly ascribed to him or to John. In his book *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, John wrote: "In 1739 my brother and I published a volume of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*",¹⁰⁰ and later adds, "in the year 1742, we published another volume of hymns".¹⁰¹ No problem exists as regards those first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749), since John expressly says that he had not seen the contents until they were in print, and there were some things in them which he did not approve of.¹⁰² Other collections likewise seem to have been the work of Charles alone, and again not necessarily approved of by John. In his *Journal* for December 1788 (eight months after Charles's death), John wrote:

Mon. 15.... This week I dedicated to the reading over my brother's works. They are short poems on the Psalms, the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. Some are bad; some mean [average]: some most excellently good. They give the true sense of Scripture, always in good English, generally in good verse. Many of them are equal to most, if not any, he ever wrote; but some still savour of that poisonous mysticism,¹⁰³ with which we were both not a little tainted before we went to America. This gave a gloomy cast, first to his mind, and then to many of his verses. This made him frequently describe religion as a melancholy thing. This so often sounded in his ears, "To the desert," and strongly persuaded in favour of solitude.¹⁰⁴

In his Preface to the 1780 Hymn Book, John stated that “but a small part of these hymns is of my own composing”, and in practice the problem relates to publications before 1749. The 1877 book recognised the problem by the way it denotes authorship: if the author is not stated, it is Charles; if it is marked W, it may be by either John or Charles; otherwise the name of the author is shown explicitly. In the case of 443 hymns, the author has been accepted as Charles, but in another 275 it has been taken to be either brother. This would suggest a large element of doubt, far more than the “very small part” referred to by John, but as time has passed scholars have become more certain that very few can, in fact, be attributed to John. Frank Baker agreed with Dr Rattenbury that, of the hymns published during the first ten years of the Methodist Revival, fewer than fifty could at present be shown to be by John. The Methodist Hymn Book of 1933 ascribed 243 to Charles and 25 to John, but of the latter figure 20 were translations, 4 alterations, and only one his own composition. *Hymns & Psalms* (1983) listed 156 hymns as by Charles and 17 as by John, but of these latter, 14 were translations. Against eight of Charles’s hymns appears a note:

The authorship of these hymns is in dispute. They may be the work of John Wesley. The discussion regarding the authorship of the Wesley corpus is continuing and the present index should not be taken as a final word on the issue.¹⁰⁵

However, if we now turn to *A Companion to Hymns & Psalms* (1988), not one of those hymns is considered to be written by John, and indeed the authorship question is not even referred to. Regarding one of them, No. 291 (“I want the Spir’t of power within”), it says: “The hymn’s fine emotional ring of aspiration is characteristic of Charles Wesley”. I have gone into more detail on these eight hymns, and on the question of authorship generally, in Appendix C.

From my survey of scholarly opinions I am able to conclude that authorship is not a serious problem. First, because the number of hymns which could be by John are relatively few; and secondly, because the scholar is likely to acquire a feel for the difference between the two writers, even if this cannot be reduced to precise criteria. I therefore feel confident that, with very few exceptions, the hymns in the Collections mentioned can be treated as by Charles, and that the conclusions of this thesis do not have to be qualified on this score.

When we bear in mind the proportion of hymns which are potentially relevant to my subject, it will be clear that there are ample hymns to choose from. In practice I have read

the whole of the 13 volumes of *The Poetical Works* and the three volumes of (previously) Unpublished Works of Charles Wesley; I have also used some which appeared in The Arminian Magazine, and may have escaped those collections. The problem has more often been what to leave out than to find evidence in support of my conclusions.

1.5 Interpreting the sources

In interpreting our sources, we need to bear in mind certain influences on Charles which affected what he wrote, or the way he wrote it.

First, there is the Relevance of John Wesley. I shall refer a great deal to John's Journal, his sermons, letters, and other writings. Such references and quotations are valuable in supplying the background to Methodist teaching and experience, but we cannot automatically assume that everything John said or wrote went for Charles as well. (Franz Hildebrandt's book *From Luther to Wesley*¹⁰⁶ fails to take this into account in its mingling of John's prose and Charles's verse, and its scholarship is diminished thereby). It is known that Charles disapproved of his brother's ordinations; more to the point of this thesis, John disapproved of what he termed Charles's mysticism,¹⁰⁷ his belief that illness was a means by which God chose to lead us towards perfection¹⁰⁸ and his use of endearments in relation to the Deity.¹⁰⁹ John was more optimistic than Charles in believing that perfection was possible in this life¹¹⁰ (though more circumscribed in defining it), and there seems to have been a difference of approach between the brothers on what constituted saving faith.¹¹¹ However, when allowance is made for all these points, we can learn a lot from John's writings.

Secondly, there is the influence of Scripture. Probably no other hymn writer has embodied biblical allusions in his writings as much as Charles Wesley. For instance, the four verses of "Spirit of faith, come down"¹¹² have at least 18 such allusions; verse 1 of "Behold the Servant of the Lord"¹¹³ has six in as many lines.¹¹⁴ "Saviour from sin, I wait to prove"¹¹⁵ has 21 recognisable quotations in five verses, and (according to Dr Moulton) "With glorious clouds encompassed round"¹¹⁶ has 56 quotations or allusions in 32 lines.¹¹⁷ Other hymns are based on a specific text: there are 1,609 such hymns based on the Old

Testament (*Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures*, 1762), and 3,491 based on the New. I have in general quoted from the King James Version as that will have the greatest correspondence with the hymns, though Wesley would render a word differently if he thought the sense demanded it.

“Scripture” for this purpose was not exclusively the canonical books. We have to remember that the practice of omitting the Old Testament apocryphal books from our Bibles is comparatively recent. Article VI of the Church of England, *Of the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation*, lists the canonical books but adds: “And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet it doth not apply them to establish any doctrine”. John’s attitude here is better documented than Charles’s. He removed from Article VI the passage just quoted when he sent the Articles of Religion to the American Methodist Church. On the other hand, he was clearly fond of the Book of Wisdom, quoting it 35 times in his published sermons, and in eleven cases the reference is to Wisdom 9:15; he also includes lessons from Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus as scripture in his Lessons for Children.¹¹⁸ Charles’s approach has been explored by James H Charlesworth,¹¹⁹ who concludes that he too was partial to the Book of Wisdom, and that Chapter 11:26 (“But thou sparest all, for they are thine, O Lord, thou Lover of souls”) inspired “Jesus, Lover of my soul”.¹²⁰ He also states “No question should remain that Charles Wesley composed hymns under the inspiration of the pseudepigraphical Fourth Book of Ezra”.¹²¹

Charles Wesley’s use of scripture went far beyond proof-texts. He dwells within the scripture in a characteristic, possibly unique, way. S T Kimbrough Jr, in an article “Charles Wesley as Biblical Interpreter”,¹²² makes the following points:

1. Wesley’s biblical text is the Authorized Version/King James Version. “One might speak of the Wesleyan lyrical corpus as a modern midrash of the Authorized Version, for, like the Jewish sages and rabbis, he often brings biblical wisdom into sharp focus by means other than the exegetical method”. (We must, however, read what Kimbrough says as subject to Wesley’s use of the Prayer Book (see below) and - occasionally, as we have just seen - of the Apocrypha).
2. Wesley actualizes the biblical text for the church’s task. “Wesley puts himself, readers, and singers into the scripture and vice versa so that the Bible lives at the moment of encounter. All become everyone in scripture and even the inanimate is

given life”.

3. Wesley respects and accepts the church’s confession that the scripture consists of the Old and New Testaments. “He is very concerned with an understanding of the Old Testament in the light of Jesus Christ, as he has received this affirmation both within and from the church, through personal experience and through scripture as an object of study... The encounter with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not with a different God from the God of the Psalms”.
4. Wesley christologizes the Old Testament. “He frequently will give an Old Testament reference as the basis for his lyric only to compose a christologically oriented poem which may be related in essence very little, if at all, to the designated text”.
5. Wesley allegorizes many biblical narratives. (An example, similar to one Kimbrough quotes, is “O thou whom once they flocked to hear” (*Hymns & Psalms* 150), where the incident of healing related in John 5:1-15 becomes an allegory of our own healing. We may note at this point that his brother was not at all keen on allegorising, and counselled preachers “Be sparing in allegorizing or spiritualizing”).¹²³
6. Wesley internalizes scripture, “that is, he digests and appropriates it in lyrical language for inner growth, direction, wholeness, and a daily walk with God and others. It is here that Wesley bears a kinship to the mystics and eastern philosophies. This makes trouble for him with the theologians, his brother John, the Calvinists, the Church of England, and hosts of others... When he speaks in phrases such as ‘I’ and ‘thou’ are one, John is uneasy and often wants to clean up Charles’s theology and language.”
7. Charles Wesley’s biblical interpretations are often life-oriented. He is concerned to bridge Christian experience and theology.

Kimbrough sets forth Wesley’s Christologizing approach in a hymn based on John 5:39:

1. Christ himself the precept gives,
(Let who will the word despise,) Bids me in the sacred leaves
Trace the way to paradise,
All his oracles explore,
Read, and pray them o’er and o’er.
2. Who with true humility
Seek him in the written word,

Christ in every page they see,
See, and apprehend their Lord;
Every scripture makes him known,
Testifies of Christ alone.

3. Here I cannot seek in vain;
Digging deep into the mine,
Hidden treasure I obtain
Pure, eternal, life Divine,
Find him in his Spirit given,
Christ the way, the Truth of heaven.¹²⁴

“Wrestling Jacob” - “Come, O thou Traveller unknown” - is a celebrated instance of christologizing and allegorizing the Old Testament, but Jacob’s ladder is another:

Jesus that Ladder is,
The incarnate Deity,
Partaker of celestial bliss
And human misery;
Sent from his high abode,
To sleeping mortals given,
He stands, and man unites to God,
And earth connects with heaven.¹²⁵

Likewise, Isaac¹²⁶ and Abel¹²⁷ speak to him of Christ. Christologising the Old Testament may seem unwarranted to us today, but it places him firmly among those who saw the Old Testament as relevant in so far as it points to Christ, as against those (Puritans and their followers, in other words) who found in the Law a continuing validity for Christians.¹²⁸

It is interesting that, after more than a century of literalism (either critical-modernist or fundamentalist), Wesley’s way of looking at the Bible has become more congenial. Ignatian meditation is increasingly popular, and similarly books like *Finding Your Story*¹²⁹ and *The Hidden Word - Your Story in Scripture*¹³⁰ encourage us to enter in imagination into the narrative of scripture.

Next, we have to emphasise Charles’s Anglicanism. Both Wesleys were, of course, faithful sons of the Church of England. We are no doubt familiar with the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral”, John’s appeal to Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Reason as sources of authority in matters of faith, but Scott Jones is clearly right in finding a fifth source of authority implicit in his works, namely the Church of England, though both Scripture and Christian antiquity (the tradition of the early Church) take precedence over it.¹³¹ It was, however, Charles who was the more conformist, disapproving for instance of his brother’s ordinations, and of a loyal address which John had sent to the King in 1744 in the name of “Methodists”. “My objection to your address in the name of Methodists is,

that it would constitute us as a sect; at least it would seem to allow that we are a body distinct from the national church. Guard against this".¹³² W Stephen Gunter has written that "The opposition of Charles Wesley to separation and lay administration of the sacraments was almost hysterical."¹³³ Evidence for this can be found in a letter dated 6 March 1760 to Nicholas Gilbert, after preachers at Norwich had administered the sacraments to local Methodists, in which Charles said: "My soul abhors the thought of separation from the Church of England. You and all the preachers know if my brother should ever leave it, I should leave him; or rather he me."¹³⁴ He once wrote, "All the difference between my brother and me was that my brother's first object was the Methodists and then the Church: mine was first the Church and then the Methodists".¹³⁵ After his death he was called a "high church bigot" by one contemporary Methodist, and in similar vein John Pawson wrote to Charles Atmore, "May all bigotry and high church zeal be eternally buried in his grave. Amen and Amen."¹³⁶ It was a stigma he seems to have been aware of during his lifetime, for he wrote thus of his labours for the Church of England:

For her, whom her apostate sons despise,
I offer up my life in sacrifice,
My life in cherishing a parent spend,
Fond of my charge, and faithful to the end...
Vile for her sake, exposed to general scorn,
Thrust out as from her pale, I gladly roam,
Banished myself to bring her wanderers home.
While the lost sheep of Israel's house I seek,
By bigots branded for a schismatic,
By real schismatics disowned, despised,
As a blind bigot on the Church's side...¹³⁷

As will become clear, the Wesleys were extremely concerned to ensure that they were not seen as tarred with "enthusiasm". That term had then a connotation of fanaticism: Dr Johnson defined it (in the religious sense) as "a vain belief of private revelation; a vain confidence of divine favour or communication", and "enthusiast" as "One who vainly imagines a private revelation; one who has a vain confidence of his intercourse with God."¹³⁸ Both out of prudence and from their inbred loyalty to the Church of England they stressed their orthodoxy as enshrined in the Thirty Nine Articles. Charles's Anglican conformity, however, went deeper than the desire to stay on the right side of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. His love of the Book of Common Prayer, for instance, has been well summarised by the Rev Professor John Lawson in "Charles Wesley: A Man of the Prayer-Book".¹³⁹ We may notice, for instance, that when Charles writes:

Captain, God of our salvation,
Thou who hast the wine-press trod,
Borne the Almighty's indignation,
Quenched the fiercest wrath of God.¹⁴⁰

he is clearly echoing the words of the 1662 Prayer Book, "provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us". Likewise when he writes "And preach with him the gracious law, And publish the DECREE OF LOVE"¹⁴¹ he is quoting Psalm 2:7 in the Prayer Book Version, "I will preach the law"; the KJV has "I will declare the decree". In his *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* (1762), those based on the Psalms very often quote the first line of the Prayer Book version, rather than of the KJV.

What we ought to find surprising is his readiness to write hymns despite this Anglican background. The Church of England had followed Calvin rather than Luther in its attitude towards hymnody, so that singing was generally limited to psalms. It is true that evangelicals like Martin Madan,¹⁴² John Newton¹⁴³ and William Cowper¹⁴⁴ were enthusiastic producers of hymns and hymn-books, but in 1775 the evangelical Anglican divine William Rands said:

I want a note for that man who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost. His Collection is large enough; it wants no addition. It is as perfect as its Author, and wants no improvement.¹⁴⁵

The use of hymns in general remained of doubtful legality in the Church of England until 1820. In that year the Archbishop of York ruled on a challenge in the ecclesiastical courts brought by the parishioners of St Paul's, Sheffield, to the publication of a hymnal by their vicar. He sanctioned a modified version of it, and the way was open for Reginald Heber to produce a book which could be integrated into the Prayer Book scheme of worship.¹⁴⁶ Interestingly, one of the charges brought against John Wesley in Georgia was that he introduced "into the church and service at the altar compositions of psalms and hymns not inspired or authorized by any proper judicature".¹⁴⁷ Some of the charges brought against him there were of doubtful validity, and in any case he refused to answer to them in a civil court, so we do not know whether this accusation was factually correct.

Notwithstanding the kinds of critical challenges which I have outlined above, this thesis will endeavour to show that Charles Wesley's corpus of hymns provides a unique insight into an important aspect of his thought; one which was not only central to the theological preoccupations of the eighteenth century, but has wider implications for our understanding of Methodism as a whole in its formative period.

Notes to Chapter 1

- 1 HOLS 1745.
- 2 Originally "With that mysterious tree".
- 3 Originally "Like that my Jesus showed".
- 4 There are, of course, many general studies of hymns: see Appendix D, Section E.
- 5 The question whether all of Wesley's poetic output (with a few insignificant exceptions for non-religious verse) should be treated as "hymns" rather than "poems" is relevant, but it should be observed that (a) Wesley himself made no distinction (for instance, entitling his verse on passages of scripture as "hymns", even though few have ever been sung); and (b) items written as poems might nevertheless come to be sung as hymns (a celebrated instance is "Come, O thou Traveller unknown"). See Teresa Berger's discussion in *Theology in Hymns? A Study of the Relationship of Doxology and Theology According to A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (1780), trans. Timothy E Kimbrough, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995, p 92.
- 6 See pages 13-16.
- 7 Epworth Press, London, 1941.
- 8 Epworth Press, London, 1948.
- 9 *Charles Wesley on Sanctification*, Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids, 1986.
- 10 *Isaac Watts: Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, The Faith Press, Glasgow, 1962.
- 11 *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, Epworth Press, London, 1941, pp 188 to 214.
- 12 *Theology in Hymns?* trans. Timothy E Kimbrough, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995, p 92.
- 13 *Ib*, p 17.
- 14 *Ib*, p 158.
- 15 *Ib*, p 154 and 158.
- 16 *Ib*, p 154.
- 17 *Doxology*, Epworth Press, London, 1980.
- 18 Hymns & Psalms 520 (HoGEL 1741).
- 19 *Doxology*, note 474.
- 20 *Ib*, p 204.
- 21 In *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, ed. S T Kimbrough Jr; Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1992, p 181.
- 22 Marshall and Todd, *English Congregational Hymns in the Eighteenth Century*, University of Kentucky, 1982, p 79.
- 23 The Myers-Briggs personality indicator sees four fundamental divisions: introvert/extravert; intuitive/sensate; thinking/feeling; and perceiving/judging. On this basis there are sixteen personality types.
- 24 *Charles Wesley's Journal*, 27 September 1738 (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 131).
- 25 S S Paul, in *The Atonement and the Sacraments*, Abingdon Press, New York, 1960, pp 20ff, has shown that Shakespeare uses "atonement" in the sense of "reconciliation". Thus in the quarrel between Norfolk and Bolingbroke (*King Richard the Second*, Act I Scene I) Richard decrees:

There shall your swords and lances arbitrate
The swelling difference of your settled hate:
Since we cannot atone you, we shall see
Justice design the victor's chivalry.
- 26 *Principles of Christian Theology*, SCM Press, London, 1966, p 280.
- 27 Hymns & Psalms 109(4) (NH 1744).
- 28 Wesley's Hymns (1877), 169(4) (H&SP 1740).
- 29 Monica Furlong, *Travelling In*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1971, p 30.
- 30 Isaiah Chapter 6, verses 1 to 7.
- 31 Frances Young, *Can These Dry Bones Live?*, SCM Press, London 1982, pp 61-62.
- 32 Hymns & Psalms 174(3).
- 33 Quoted by John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*, SCM Press, London 1990, p 323.
- 34 See F W Dillistone, *The Christian Understanding of Atonement*, Nisbet, Welwyn, 1968, p 348.
- 36 Frances Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*, SPCK, London, 1975, p 92.
- 36 *Ib*, p 91.

37 *Windows on the Cross*, DLT, London, 1995, p 68.

38 Letter dated 15 September 1790 (*Letters*, Volume 8 p 238).

39 P T Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1910, p 44.

40 Frances Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*, SPCK, London, 1975, p 122.

41 See page 154 below.

42 This appeared as no. 17 in *Hymns and Songs* (1969), a supplement to the Methodist Hymn Book, but did not find its way into *Hymns & Psalms*. The only truly didactic hymns in the Wesley corpus are *Hymns on the Trinity* (1767).

43 For a discussion on whether the term “conversion” is accurate, see Chapter 5.2; but there is no doubt that he experienced a radical change.

44 See Chapter 5.2 on his appeal to experience before proclaiming that “Christ died for all”.

45 I owe this to the Rev John Munsey Turner, speaking at Westminster College, Oxford, on 2 November 1996. Teresa Berger reminds us that the joint commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council acknowledged “that the hymns of Charles Wesley, a rich source of Methodist spirituality, find echoes and recognition in the Catholic soul” (*Theology in Hymns?* trans. Timothy E Kimbrough, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995).

46 Albert C Outler, *John Wesley (A Library of Protestant Thought)*, New York, OUP 1964, p 102.

47 A S Gregory, *On Hymns and Hymn-Books*, Epworth Press, London, 1979, p 83.

48 H&P 217 (“Arise, my soul, arise”), verses 3 and 4 (H&SP 1742).

49 Edward Houghton, *The Handmaid of Piety*, Wesley Fellowship, Quack Books 1992, p 16.

50 *The Life of the Rev John Fletcher*, by John Benson, (John Mason, London, 1838), pp 29-30.

51 PW Volume 3, p 216 (HoLS 1745), “In this expressive bread I see”.

52 PW Volume 7 p 276 (SH 1762).

53 PW Volume 9, p 2.

54 “We ask the gift of righteousness” is almost certainly a Wesley hymn, but cannot be traced, probably because of the indexing problem mentioned in Appendix B.

55 George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, chapter 2.

56 Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*, Chapter 9.

57 H&P 569 (H&SP 1742). *The Arminian Magazine* Volume 7 (1784), p 643.

58 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 11 (1788), pp 191 and 243-244.

59 PW Volume 6, p 219 (Funeral Hymns 1759).

60 PW Volume 5, p 25 (H&SP 1749).

61 *The Arminian Magazine* Volume 12 (1789), p 126.

62 PW Volume 4, p 281 (RH 1747).

63 PW Volume 4, p 409 (H&SP 1749).

64 H&P 733(3) (H&SP 1742).

65 MHB 487 (H&SP 1749).

66 *The Arminian Magazine* Volume 9 (1786), p 136-137.

67 Letter to Sarah Gwynne (Junior - later his wife) dated 30 December 1748 (Unpublished letter at John Rylands Library, Volume 1, reference DDW 5/11).

68 See John R Tyson, *Charles Wesley on Sanctification*, Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids, 1986, p 58.)

69 These doubts might be dispelled if we had a full corpus of John’s sermons.

70 *Charles Wesley’s Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the first time transcribed from the original* by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge, WHS Occasional Publication 1987.

71 Dr Kenneth G C Newport, lecture and notes at Westminster College, Oxford, 27 January 1999.

72 *London Quarterly Review*, 1957, p 264, article by Wesley F Swift, “Brothers Charles and John”.

73 *ib*, p 276.

74 *Methodist Magazine*, 1815, p 457. A short extract is in the above article (but note that the page reference is wrong).

75 *London Quarterly Review*, 1957, p 267, article by W L Doughty on “Charles Wesley, Preacher”.

76 See Volume 2 of unpublished letters of Charles Wesley, reference 7/13; the date given is 9 September 1766. The hymn appears in *UPCW* Volume 3, p 443, but it is not entirely clear whether the lines are by him or are a quotation.

77 From Journal entry, 27 September 1738 (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 131).

- 78 *PWHS* Volume 47, p 128.
- 79 Moore was one of John Wesley's preachers, ordained by him in 1789, and also his literary executor.
- 80 From *The Life of John Wesley*, Volume ii, London, for Kershaw, 1824, p 369; *PWHS* Volume XLVII, p 7.
- 81 Article by Frank Baker, "Charles Wesley's Productivity as a Religious Poet", *PWHS* Volume XLVII, p 1. However, I am by no means clear how all these scriptural hymns could have been written in a period *beginning* in 1762 when so many of them were published in that year.
- 82 John R Tyson, "Charles Wesley, Evangelist", in *Methodist History*, Volume XXV (October 1988), pub. Madison, New Jersey, p 41.
- 83 Article by Frank Baker, "Charles Wesley's Productivity as a Religious Poet", *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Volume XLVII, p 3-4.
- 84 *ib*, p.1. This would imply that there were 4,250 still unpublished; but Baker elsewhere refers only to 1,350 in this category (*Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, Epworth Press, London, 1962, p 387).
- 85 John R Tyson, "Charles Wesley, Evangelist", in *Methodist History*, Volume XXV (October 1988), pub. Madison, New Jersey, p 41.
- 86 *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, ed. Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett, Methodist Publishing House, 1988, p 606.
- 87 John R Tyson, *Charles Wesley- A Reader*, OUP 1989, p 21.
- 88 *Guide to the Hymns and Tunes of American Methodism*, compiled by Samuel J Rigal, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, p 215.
- 89 Frank Baker, *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, Epworth 1962, p v.
- 90 *Ib*, p xi.
- 91 *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, in three volumes 2, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1992.
- 92 Frank Baker, *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, Epworth 1962, p liii.
- 93 *Wesley's Hymns* (1877), 328 (SH 1762).
- 94 Oliver A Beckerlegge, *Charles Wesley and the Scriptures*, *Epworth Review*, Vol 15, Part 2, p 46.
- 95 There are 351 hymns in this volume, including many written for widows or about friendship. Those which mention as a significant subject any of the following are deemed to be relevant: the blood of Christ, the crucifixion, atonement, the death of Christ, forgiveness, redemption, salvation, the victory of the cross, and the quenching of wrath. The blood of Christ is referred to in 22% of these hymns.
- 96 Bernard Lord Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, Epworth, London, 1942.
- 97 *PWHS* Volume 3 (1901-02), p 57ff.
- 98 An example is "Thee will I praise with all my heart" (*H&P* 41; not published in Wesley's lifetime).
- 99 Frank Baker, *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, Epworth Press, London, 1962, pp x-xi.
- 100 John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Epworth Press, London, 1952, p 10.
- 101 *ib*, p 27.
- 102 *ib*, p 39.
- 103 John used Mysticism in a pejorative sense. He wrote to Mary Bishop on 19 September 1773 (*Letters* vi 43) of the mystics, "each of them makes his experience the standard of religion". On 30 November 1774 he wrote (*Letters* vi 127), "In every age and country Satan has whispered to those who began to taste the powers of the world to come... 'Au désert! Au désert!'... Nay, but I say, 'To the Bible! To the Bible!'".
- 104 *John Wesley's Journal*, 15 December 1788 (Standard edition 7:456-458).
- 105 *Hymns & Psalms Music Edition* 1983, p cxxvii.
- 106 Lutterworth Press, London, 1951.
- 107 See note 91 above.
- 108 See Chapter 6, page 195f.
- 109 See Appendix C, page 251.
- 110 See Chapter 6, page 176ff.
- 111 See Chapter 5, page 148ff.
- 112 *H&P* 325 (*HPT* 1746).
- 113 *H&P* 788 (first published 1745; *H&SP* 1749).
- 114 See *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1988, p 446.

115 *H&P* 747 (*H&SP* 1742).
 116 *H&P* 184 (*FH* 1767) (the full 32 lines will be found in Wesley's Hymns (1877), 128).
 117 See the article "Charles Wesley and the Scriptures" by Oliver Beckerlegge in *Epworth Review*,
 Volume 15 (1988), Part 2, page 44.
 118 See Scott J Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, Kingswood Books,
 Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995, pp 140-143.
 119 "The Wesleys and the Canon: An Unperceived Openness" in *Proceedings of the Wesley*
Historical Society, ed. S T Kimbrough Jr, Madison New Jersey, 1996, p 63.
 120 *H&P* 528 (*H&SP* 1740).
 121 Charlesworth, *op cit*, pp 81-86.
 122 *Methodist History*, Volume XXVI.3 (April 1988), pub. Madison, New Jersey, p 142.
 123 See Scott J Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, Kingswood Books, Abingdon
 Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1992, p 120.
 124 *PW* Volume 11, no. 1737 (first published 1762).
 125 *PW* Volume 9, on Genesis 28:12-13 (first published 1762).
 126 "That Isaac laden with the wood/ Of his own sacrifice", *PW* Volume 11, no. 1570 (SH 1762).
 127 Christ is "the righteous, real Abel": *PW* Volume 11, no. 1582 (SH 1762).
 128 This theme is explored by Nigel Atkinson in *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*,
Tradition and Reason, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1997, pp 78-117.
 129 Edited by Melvyn Matthews (DLT, London, 1992).
 130 by Melvyn Matthews (DLT, London, c 1990).
 131 Scott J Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, Kingswood Books, Abingdon
 Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995, pp 89ff.
 132 Quoted by Robin A Leaver in *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, ed. S T Kimbrough Jr,
 Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1992, p 162.
 133 W Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of "Love Divine"*, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press,
 Nashville, Tennessee, 1989, p 172.
 134 Unpublished letter of Charles Wesley at John Rylands Library, Extract 21.
 135 See *John Wesley's Letters*, volume 8, p 267.
 136 *Letters of John Pawson*, ed. Bowman and Vickers, WMHS Publications 1994, p 68.
 137 "An Epistle to the Reverend Mr John Wesley": *PW* Volume 6, page 60.
 138 *Johnson's Dictionary: A Modern Selection*, Papermac Books, London, 1982.
 139 *Wesley Historical Society (Bristol Branch) Bulletin* No. 72, 1996.
 140 *PW* Volume 6 p 161 (Hymns on the Expected Invasion, 1759).
 141 Quoted by John Lawson, *Wesley Historical Society (Bristol Branch) Bulletin* No. 72, 1996.
 142 Martin Madan (1726-1790) was a cousin of William Cowper, and is chiefly remembered for his
 version of what has become "Lo, he comes with clouds descending".
 143 John Newton (1725-1807) was at one time master of a slave ship, but became a strong
 abolitionist. In 1764 he was ordained and appointed curate of Olney, where he subsequently
 collaborated with Cowper in producing *Olney Hymns* (1779).
 144 William Cowper (1731-1800) was a distinguished minor poet who collaborated with John
 Newton in producing *Olney Hymns* (1779).
 145 Quoted by Ian Bradley, *Abide With Me*, SCM Press, London, 1997, p 2.
 146 *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F L Cross and E A Livingstone (Third
 Edition), OUP 1997, p 811.
 147 See his Journal for August 1737 (Standard Edition, Vol 1:374).

2. THE ATONEMENT: SUBSTITUTE OR REPRESENTATIVE?

Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?¹

2.1 Wesley and the Doctrine of Substitution

For a great many of us, atonement is by our upbringing associated almost wholly with penal substitution. It is a concept easy to understand, and to illustrate with metaphors from (for instance) the police court. As a hymn writer (not Wesley!) has put it,

He knew how wicked men had been,
He knew that God must punish sin,
So out of pity Jesus said,
He'd bear the punishment instead.²

Most theologians who use the term "substitution", however, would regard that verse as far too simplistic. They would accept that Jesus died in our stead, but would be unhappy about asserting that he was punished by his Father, or that a penalty was transferred from him to ourselves.

Beneath the umbrella of the term "substitution", in fact, we find a number of quite distinct attitudes, and many theological problems. We can consider these by posing the following questions.

1. Did God punish Jesus? Was our penalty transferred to him?
2. Was God's attitude towards us primarily one of anger ("the Wrath of God"), to be contrasted with the merciful attitude of his Son?
3. Was Jesus cursed by God?
4. If there was no transferred penalty, can the atonement still be seen as a means by which God proclaimed his justice?
5. If there was no transferred penalty, can the word "substitute" still have meaning?
6. Was the atonement the prerequisite of God's forgiveness, or its effect?
7. Was the atonement the means by which God was propitiated, or by which sin was expiated?

I shall be looking at the traditional and modern answers to these questions, then seeing how Charles Wesley and his contemporaries would have dealt with them.

Did God punish Jesus?

The first question was whether God punished Jesus, and whether our penalty was transferred to him. The logic of this approach is that it was necessary for God to punish sin, either to be satisfied (or propitiated), or to demonstrate his justice. Scriptural support for this view has been argued from Romans 3:25:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. (KJV).

Similarly one could turn in the Old Testament to Isaiah 53:

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...

10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief...

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Substitutionary theology is prominent in Calvin's *Institutes* (1536) and the Westminster Confession (1643). The *Institutes* state that Christ:

was made a substitute and a surety in place of transgressors and even submitted as a criminal, to sustain and suffer all the punishment which would have been inflicted on them.³

The Westminster Confession is less explicit here, but its emphasis is on the satisfaction rendered to the Father by Jesus:

The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.⁴

Modern theologians have almost unanimously rejected this approach, but in the eighteenth century, many theologians and hymn-writers saw our sins, in the Atonement, as "imputed" to Christ, who then bore the punishment which should properly have been ours. Toplady, for instance, likened our sins to the National Debt, as a burden we could never satisfy ourselves;⁵ but Christ, by his perfect satisfaction of God's requirements, provided an infinite counterbalance by which all our sins could be outweighed. This concept of divine account-keeping is at odds with the Christian doctrine of grace and forgiveness; for if God is "satisfied", in what real sense can he be said to forgive? As William Law⁶ objected in his correspondence with John Wesley, "There is... no fictitious atonement, no folly of debtor and creditor".⁷

The second objection is that the punishment of an innocent person in place of the guilty does not satisfy the demands of justice; rather, it is a flagrant injustice. For this reason, the idea that God could in any real sense "punish" Jesus is difficult to imagine. As P T Forsyth, writing in 1910, says,

the sacrifice of Christ could not be penal in the sense that God punished Christ. That is an absolutely unthinkable thing. How could God punish Him in whom he was always well pleased. The two things are a contradiction in terms. And it cannot be true in the sense that Christ was in our stead in such a way as to exclude and exempt us.⁸

Vincent Taylor⁹ goes so far as to write:

It has long been agreed that Christ was not punished in man's stead. On this issue Calvin spoke the decisive word. "How could He be angry with the beloved Son, with whom His soul was well pleased", "Institutes", II xvi 10. But Calvin speaks of Christ as abandoned and forsaken of God.

- even when, it should be added, Calvin's *Institutes* clearly speak of Christ as a substitute in the quotation on Taylor's previous page.

It is all very well, and not unhelpful, to draw parallels between the self-sacrifice of Jesus and those who gave their lives in substitution for others in the concentration camps. But the parallel breaks down at the other end: God is not a concentration-camp Commandant.

The third objection is that Scripture appears to speak of "expiating" sin rather than "propitiating" God. If we look again at the key passage in Romans 3:25:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.

The words translated here by the KJV as "a propitiation" correspond to the Greek word *hilasterion*, and while likewise rendered by the RSV Interlinear Greek-English New Testament as "a propitiation" (its literal rendering), becomes "an expiation" (the equivalent English) in the text. Controversy has raged over the exact meaning of *hilasterion*. Morna Hooker, in *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, says that this word *can* mean "propitiation"; however, in the Septuagint the related verb *hilaskesthai* is used to translate the Hebrew verb *kipper*, meaning "to cover over", "wipe off", or "cleanse". Hence "expiation" seems to fit the usage better¹⁰. Likewise, J S Whale, in *Victor and Victim*, stresses that

"in no case is Yahweh the object of the verb. He is always its subject. That is, there is no evidence for a statement or hint that God is 'propitiated', as that word is conventionally used. He is always the first mover in the work of reconciliation"¹¹

This question whether Romans 3:25 refers to *propitiation* or *expiation* is a difficult one and is discussed further on page 52.

The fourth objection is that the very passage of scripture in Isaiah 53 which could be urged in favour of substitution is not used as such by the New Testament writers. "The Servant song in Isaiah 53 clearly represents the Servant's death as an *asham* or guilt offering", writes J S Whale in "Victor and Victim".¹² "It makes twelve distinct and explicit statements that the Servant suffers the *penalty* of other men's sins. The doctrine is therefore substitutionary". But, as Whale goes on to say, this is much less pronounced in the Septuagint (Greek) version;¹³ and as Morna Hooker writes, the passage in Luke 22:37 that Jesus was "numbered with the transgressors":

Is the only occasion in the synoptic gospels on which an explicit quotation from Isaiah 53 is applied to the death of Jesus – a remarkable fact, since to us this is the passage of scripture which above any other appears to be an appropriate description of the meaning of Jesus' sufferings. Even more remarkable is the fact that the quotation here is in no way applied to the *significance* of his death, but simply to the fact that he was put to death in the company of malefactors!¹⁴ .

It can be added that, even if Isaiah 53 is used in a substitutionary way, it begins to prove too much, for it speaks not only of "transgressions" and "iniquities" (verse 5), but also of "griefs" and "sorrows" (verse 4). These can hardly be borne in a substitutionary way: they are more appropriate to the work of Christ as representative (Chapter 2.3).

The fifth objection is that Scripture does not say that Christ suffered "instead of" us. Vincent Taylor states that the word *anti*, "instead of", is never used by St Paul. Always the word he uses when speaking of the death of Christ is *huper*, "on behalf of", except in 1 Thessalonians 5:10, where it is *peri*, "on account of". "From this", he says, "we may certainly infer that he did not look upon the death of Christ as a substitute".¹⁵ After considering the remaining writers of the New Testament, he concludes: "In none of the passages we have examined is [the work of Christ] described as that of a substitute. His obedience is not rendered instead of ours, and our punishment is not transferred to him".¹⁶

William Temple summarises the argument succinctly thus:

His suffering is substituted for ours; but it is not a transferred penalty; it is something in the nature of a price paid; it is something which He gave, by means of which we are set free.¹⁷
Once there is love, forgiveness does not mean remission of penalty. Penalty does not come in. Forgiveness means restoration to intimacy.¹⁸

I shall be considering later whether Jesus can still be properly regarded as our substitute. What has already emerged, however, is that the term "*penal* substitution" is not warranted in scripture, and I consider it to be profoundly unhelpful. It far too

strongly suggests the doctrine that God demanded satisfaction; that he could not forgive until that satisfaction had been rendered; and that justice was satisfied by Jesus taking our place. We need to remember that the terms "penal" and "punishment" are not used in the New Testament in this context, and to use them to describe the substitution of Jesus is therefore misleading.

What of Charles Wesley? There is no doubt from his hymns that he accepted the doctrine of penal substitution. We have already encountered the lines:

For what you have done
His blood must atone;
The Father hath punished for you his dear Son.¹⁹

(It is significant that the word "punished" was replaced by "stricken" in the 1902 revision of the Methodist Hymn Book, and in 1933 the whole verse disappeared).²⁰ Likewise, in the hymn "Saviour, the world's and mine":²¹

Thou my pain, my curse hath took,
All my sins were laid on thee.

Similarly, in "What shall I do my God to love, /My Saviour, and the world's, to praise?" he uses a "reckoning" word -

The kindness thou to me hast shown
Whose every sin was counted mine.²²

If there were any doubt, the word substitute is expressly used:

For charged with all their guilt he stood,
Sinners from suffering to redeem,
For them he poured out all his blood,
Their Substitute, he died for them.²³

Juridical ideas are present in "'Tis finished! The Messiah dies!":²⁴

'Tis finished! all the debt is paid;
Justice divine is satisfied...
Exacted is the legal pain...
Saved from the legal curse I am.

Likewise:

The debt's discharged, the ransom's paid,
My Father must forgive.²⁵

Indeed, Wesley refers in one hymn ("Father, let the sinner go")²⁶ to grace being bought!

2. Can thy justice aught reply
To our prevailing plea?
Jesus died thy grace to buy
For all mankind, and me;
Still before thy righteous throne
Stands the Lamb as newly slain;
Canst thou turn away thy Son,

Or let him plead in vain?

However, Wesley may himself have been conscious of irony here. As we shall see, he believes that the payment or satisfaction, though rendered by Jesus to the Father, is provided ultimately by God, and not by man to God. The truth remains that God's grace is "immense and unconfined",²⁷ and only within the ambit of grace does the Son render satisfaction to the Father; that satisfaction is the effect of grace, not its cause.

We can therefore agree wholeheartedly with Alan C Clifford when he writes:

None can doubt the objective "substitutionism" of the Wesleys, even though they also stressed the subjective, experiential nature of Christianity. However, the Wesleys never confused the subjective impact of the death of Christ with the objective ground of the atonement. Indeed, the very satisfaction of divine justice, viewed in penal, retributive terms, was a necessary condition of the display of divine love to all mankind.²⁸

In his substitutionary theology, Wesley was following the prevailing attitude of his day. In many ways this is enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer and Thirty-Nine Articles. Article IX ("Of Original or Birth-sin") states:

Original sin...is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation...

With this background, we can understand the words of the General Confession with which the Book of Common Prayer introduces the Communion service, and which to many modern Christians seems a wholly inappropriate grovelling before God:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against thy divine Majesty, Provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable...

Although, then, Charles Wesley follows the prevailing attitude of his day, his approach (as we shall see in subsequent chapters) is much broader than that of many of his contemporaries. It is interesting to compare his doctrine with that of Toplady.²⁹ Toplady, as a Calvinist, is concerned to stress the imputation of our sin to Christ, and of his righteousness to us, and while (as we shall see from Chapter 5.4, "Christ our Righteousness") both ideas can be found in Wesley also, they are not taught as didactically as in Toplady. The latter writes "All my sins imputed were/ To my dear, incarnate God",³⁰ and similarly:

5. The Law was satisfied by him
Who flesh for me was made:
Its *penalty* he underwent,
Its precepts he obeyed.
7. The spotless Saviour *lived* for me,
And *died* upon the Mount;
The obedience of his life and death
Is placed to my account."

In "From whence this fear and unbelief"³² Toplady's emphasis is much less on God's mercy than on his inexorable righteousness and justice, which however cannot charge more than once for our misdeeds:

1. From whence this fear and unbelief?
Hath not the Father put to grief
His spotless Son for me?
And will the righteous Judge of men,
Condemn me for that debt of sin,
Which, Lord, was charged on thee?
2. Complete Atonement thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate'er thy people owed;
Nor can his wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in his righteousness,
And sprinkled with thy blood.
3. If thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath divine:
Payment God cannot *twice* demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.

The Wrath of God

The second question we posed was whether God's attitude towards us was primarily one of anger, to be contrasted with the merciful attitude of his Son. (As the hymn already quoted puts it, "So out of pity Jesus said/He'd bear the punishment instead"). The main argument for considering God's attitude to be primarily one of anger is the references to "the wrath of God" in the Bible, and particularly in St Paul's Letter to the Romans:

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (2:5).

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (1:18).

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (5:9)

What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (9:22).

That wrath, it is argued, had to be placated or propitiated by an act of obedience on the part of Christ; and such a view emerges very clearly from Calvin's *Institutes*.

God's righteous curse bars our access to him, and God in his capacity of judge is angry towards us. Hence an expiation must intervene in order that Christ as priest may obtain God's favour for us and appease his wrath. Thus Christ to perform this office had to come forward with a

sacrifice.³³

John Wesley himself seems to have taken this view, as well as seeing the cross as an infliction of punishment on Jesus. When William Law had written to him (as already noted) that "There is no wrath in God, no fictitious atonement, no folly of debtor and creditor",³⁴ John repudiated his view thus:

But it is certain, had God never been angry, he could never have been reconciled. So that, in affirming this, Mr Law strikes at the very root of the Atonement, and finds a short method of converting Deists. Although, therefore, I do not term God, as Mr Law supposes, "a wrathful Being", which conveys a wrong idea; yet I firmly believe that He was angry with all mankind, and that He was reconciled to them by the death of his Son.³⁵

Similarly, in his *Notes on the New Testament* relating to Romans 3:25, he writes:

Whom God hath set forth – before angels and men. A propitiation – To appease an offended God. But if, as some teach, God never was offended, there was no need of this propitiation. And, if so, Christ died in vain. To declare his righteousness – To demonstrate not only his clemency, but his justice; even that vindictive justice whose essential character and principal office is, to punish sin.

For a demonstration of his righteousness – Both of his justice and mercy. That he might be just – Showing his justice on his own Son... The attribute of justice must be preserved inviolate; and inviolate it is preserved, if there was a real infliction of punishment on our Saviour.

We may note that John, in using the word "propitiation" was here following not only the King James Version but also Article XXXI of the Church of England:

Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross
The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone.

Much the same language is used in Prayer of Consecration in the Book of Common Prayer Communion service, though the word "propitiation" is omitted:

a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

It is not however clear how John squared his view of God's need to be reconciled with the statement in 2 Corinthians 5:19, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (KJV).³⁶ But it seems clear that Charles followed his brother, though, as we shall see, he believed that "God hath quenched the wrath of God".³⁷

The first objection to such a view is that it sets the anger, the vindictive justice, or the outraged majesty of the Father over against the merciful love of the Son. The New Testament is clear that the initiative in our salvation is that of the Father, who sends his Son into the world: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that

whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV). And even in the New Testament passage which seems most substitutionary, Romans 3:25, it is stated that God "presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood".

As Tom Smail puts it:³⁸

The action of Christ on the cross has its primary source in the will and initiative of the Father. Where that is obscured, as in some theories of atonement traditionally most valued in evangelical circles, there can be disaster both at the doctrinal and the pastoral level. In Anselm for example God is seen primarily as the requirer of satisfaction, and in Calvin primarily as the imposer of punishment, rather than as the giver of the sacrifice. This can lead to the attitude which sets the tender love of Jesus who died for us over against the stern judgement of the Father who requires that death. The theological consequence of such a view is to throw the unity of Father and Son in character, will and action into jeopardy, the pastoral consequence is to attack our confidence in the Father's own love for us at its heart. The result can be that we are left with a cringing guilt-ridden religion which has to hide behind the love of Jesus in order to be saved from the only just contained wrath of an angry God.

The second objection is that Paul, when he uses the term "wrath", is not speaking of an overriding personal attitude of anger on the part of God, but of something more impersonal. It can be commented that Paul speaks more frequently of "the Wrath" than "the wrath of God"; and C H Dodd has observed that "Paul never uses the verb 'to be angry' with God as its subject".³⁹ He points out that Paul speaks of the love of God and says that God loves us; that he speaks of the graciousness of God and that he says God is gracious; that he speaks of the faithfulness of God and that he says God is faithful; but that although he speaks of the wrath of God he never says that God is angry. From this, Dodd concludes that the "wrath of God" is impersonal, and similarly G B Caird writes:

By *the wrath of God* Paul means the principle of retribution built into the structure of God's ordered universe. It may operate through the punitive functions of the state (Romans 13:4), through political disaster (1 Thessalonians 2:16), or through the moral deterioration that ensues upon a rejection of God (Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 4:17-19). But the essence of it is that God allows men to reap the harvest of their own disobedience (Galatians 6:7-8).⁴⁰

This view is rejected by Dr George Carey in "The Gate of Glory",⁴¹ but Carey nevertheless stresses that God's wrath "is never isolated from his covenantal love".

William Temple took a similar view:

If "anger" and "wrath" are taken to mean the emotional reaction of irritated self-concern, there is no such thing in God. But if God is holy love, and I am in any degree given to uncleanness or selfishness, then there is, in that degree, stark antagonism in God towards me.⁴²

What all scholars would now agree on is that God's wrath is subordinate to his love. It can never be a case of a loving Son appeasing the anger of a vindictive Father: that would be totally contrary to scripture, and destructive of Trinitarian doctrine. All three Persons must act harmoniously together for our salvation: as St Augustine put it, "Everything is the combined work of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of both, in equal and

harmonious activity".⁴³ Interestingly, J S Whale points out that Martin Luther occasionally identifies the wrath of God with Satan, on the basis that Satan is God's instrument.⁴⁴ Whale refers to 1 Corinthians 5:5 (among other texts) in support of this view:

Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

Luther himself treats wrath as an impersonal entity, though none the less inflicted by God:

"The law brings wrath", because as is said in Galatians 3:10, "cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them... Plainly wrath is a greater evil for us than corruption, for we hate punishment more than guilt...

So the law reveals a twofold evil, [one] inward and the other outward. The first, which we inflict on ourselves, is sin and the corruption of nature; the second, which God inflicts, is wrath, death, and being accursed...

The companion of this faith and righteousness is grace or mercy, the good will of God, against wrath which is the partner of sin, so that he who believes in Christ has a merciful God...

This grace truly produces peace of heart until finally a man is healed from his corruption and feels he has a gracious God... Hence, just as wrath is a greater evil than the corruption of sin, so grace is a greater good than that health of righteousness which we have said comes from faith... The grace of God...is an outward good, the opposite of wrath...

We therefore have two goods of the gospel against the two evils of the law: the gift on account of sin, and grace on account of wrath.⁴⁵

Is it possible, then, to regard God's wrath as his instrument for bringing us to repentance, rather than personal animosity towards us? A useful clue is provided by Origen (185–254):

If you hear of God's anger and his wrath do not think of anger and wrath as emotions experienced by God... We, too, put on a severe face for our children not because that is our true feeling but because we are accommodating ourselves to their level... If we let our kindly feelings towards the child show in our face and allow our affections for it to be clearly seen we spoil the child and make it worse. So God is said to be wrathful and declares he is angry in order that you may be corrected and improved.⁴⁶

My own view is that Dodd and Caird were right in seeing an impersonal element in the "wrath of God", but wrong in confining this to forces of retribution in the world at large. That the wrath is impersonal can be argued from experience as well as from scripture. When John Wesley enquired into the state of persons "who had, almost every night during the past week, cried aloud during the preaching", he listed under his findings:

Others gave a very clear and particular account from the beginning to the end. The word of God pierced their souls, and convinced them of inward as well as outward sin. They saw and felt the wrath of God abiding on them, and were afraid of his judgments. And here the accuser came with great power, telling them, "There was no hope; they were lost for ever." The pains of body then seized them in a moment, and extorted those loud and bitter cries.⁴⁷

John uses the phrase "they saw and felt the wrath of God abiding on them" (no doubt

with John 3:36 in mind), but he does not say that they spoke of God's personal anger against them. The same phrase is used in another entry:

Her husband, who was before little awakened, was just then cut to the heart, and felt the wrath of God abiding on him; nor did he cease crying to God, till his prayers and tears were swallowed up in thanksgiving.⁴⁸

In Chapter 7 I shall be looking at the trend in modern theology to regard God as *passible* (capable of suffering), whereas most traditional theologians have deemed him *impassible*. As the Thirty-Nine Articles put it, he "is without body, parts, or passions".⁴⁹ The traditional view would itself argue against a God who felt anger, as well as against one who felt grief.⁵⁰ Hence "the wrath of God" could easily have been seen in impersonal terms.

Such an impersonal interpretation may logically lead us to see the wrath as the mechanism by which God has provided for his displeasure against sin to be experienced as pangs of conscience or feelings of guilt (though also, in the longer run, the inevitable effects of sin on our well-being). In our lifetime, such feelings can be deadened by material comforts (affluence, success, alcohol, drugs, etc); in eternity, they could well become hellish. The accounts already mentioned from John Wesley's Journal suggest that wrath is experienced by those convicted of sin but ceases to be so when they receive the assurance that Christ died for them. To this extent, therefore, the cross can be said to turn away the wrath of God, and to be propitiatory. Stephen H Travis writes:

Dunn has made out a strong case for the view that according to Paul's "theology" of sacrifice Christ's death cancels out human sin by destroying it. However, the effect of sin being destroyed in this way is of course that the wrath of Romans 1:18-32 no longer hangs over those who identify with Christ as their representative. So it is possible to say that expiation leads to propitiation, and to avoid polarizing the two ideas.

However, to admit that a reference to God's wrath underlies Paul's use of *hilasterion* is not to introduce the idea of retribution. For if we ask what is the nature of the wrath described in Romans 1:18-32, we find it is not the retributive inflicting of punishment from outside, but God's allowing of people to experience the intrinsic consequences of their refusal to live in relationship with him. "God gave them up" (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). God's wrath is his judgement expressed as alienation from God. As *hilasterion* Christ does not suffer punishment from God and thereby avert his wrath; he enters into humanity's experience of sin's consequences to destroy sin and restore people to relationship with God.⁵¹

We may, finally, quote William Law on this point:

The is no wrath that stands between God and us, but what is awakened in the dark place of our own fallen nature; and to quench this wrath, and not His own, God gave His only begotten Son to be made man. God has no more wrath in himself than he had before the creation, when he had only Himself to love.⁵²

In summary, we can refer to God's displeasure at sin as his *wrath*, but anger is not his

primary attitude towards us, and there is no question of having to change that primary attitude through the cross. What does need to be dealt with are the feelings of guilt which arise when the wrath is experienced on conviction of sin: which is why the assurance that Christ paid the penalty has often been so liberating, even if the theology of it was expressed in a crude form. It is an instance of a concept having religious value even where the theology is unacceptable.

It is certainly clear to Charles Wesley, however, that the Son suffered the Father's wrath. If I can quote again from "All ye that pass by":

The Lord, in the day
Of his anger, did lay
Your sins on the Lamb, and he bore them away.⁵³

Likewise:

Thy feeble flesh abhorred to bear
The wrath of an almighty God.⁵⁴

We can note at this point that Wesley makes no distinction between wrath and anger: the need for his verse to scan is probably his main concern. In a poem based on John 19:17, and only recently published, he writes:

Victim of an angry God,
Devoted to the skies,
Isaac-like he bears the wood
Of his own sacrifice...⁵⁵

Likewise:

Tempted like us our Saviour was,
Divinely to the desert led,
Like us he languished on the cross,
Deserted at his greatest need,
Left to sustain our utmost load,
Abandoned by his angry God.⁵⁶

This wrath is, however, disarmed by the sacrifice of Christ:

My God, in Jesus pacified.⁵⁷

Jesus speaks, and pleads his blood!
He disarms the wrath of God;
Now my Father's bowels move,
Justice lingers into love.⁵⁸

Yet, though there is anger in God, it is still true to say that "God is love": his anger is contained within, and does not override, his love. Charles writes in his Journal:

I asked [Mrs Sears] whether she thought God was love; and not anger, as Satan would persuade her. Then I preached the gospel, which she received with all imaginable eagerness. When we had for some time continued together in prayer, she rose up another creature, strongly and explicitly [declaring] her faith in the blood of Christ, and full persuasion that she was now accepted in the Beloved.⁵⁹

It is through this love, says Wesley, that in the atonement "God hath quenched the wrath

of God”⁶⁰ : in other words, God has, in Christ, provided the means by which his anger can be quenched:

Through the perfect righteousness
Of God the Saviour here,
Through his merits we possess
Precious faith in hearts sincere,
Justice now is satisfied,
God’s appeased, for God hath died.⁶¹

This point emerges even more strongly in the following lines, where Wesley appears to regard Jesus as appeasing an angry God but nevertheless makes it clear that the initiative in reconciliation is God’s:

The Mediator stands between
An angry God and guilty race;
The blood of sprinkling speaks for me,
Justice appeased gives way to grace.
God was in Christ, and all mankind
Now to himself hath reconciled.⁶²

Wesley was certainly not alone in regarding God as angry with sinners. The *Olney Hymns* of Newton and Cowper contain one by Cowper (“Israel, in ancient days”) where verse 2 runs:

The paschal sacrifice,
And blood be-sprinkled door,
Seen with enlightened eyes,
And once applied with power,
Would teach the need of other blood
To reconcile an angry God.⁶³

Similarly, in John Cennick⁶⁴ we find the following lines:

4. The Saviour by his streaming blood,
Hath one atonement made:
Hath pacified an angry God!
And all his wrath allayed.

The anger of God with sinners is also present also in Isaac Watts (“this incensed God”, as he describes him in “Sing to the Lord, ye heavenly hosts”).⁶⁵ Thus, in “Like sheep we went astray”:⁶⁶

2. How dreadful was the hour
When God our wanderings laid
And did at once his vengeance pour
Upon the Shepherd’s head!

Likewise, in “Lift up your eyes to the heavenly seats”:⁶⁷

2. ‘Twas well, my soul, he died for thee,
And shed his vital blood,
Appeased stern justice on the tree
And then arose to God.

At times, Watts seems to contrast the vengeance of the Father with the mercy of the Son:

1. Thus saith the Ruler of the Skies,
*Awake my dreadful sword [originally "iron rod"]
Awake my wrath, and smite the man
My fellow, saith the Lord.*
2. Vengeance received the dread command,
And armèd down she flies,
Jesus submits to his Father's hand,
And bows his head and dies.⁶⁸

In "How condescending and how kind/ Was God's Eternal Son?":⁶⁹

2. When justice by our sins provoked
Drew forth its dreadful sword,
He gave his soul up to the stroke
Without a murmuring word.

And again:

2. Infinite pity touched the heart
Of the Eternal Son,
Descending from the heavenly court
He left his Father's throne.⁷⁰

But this is not the whole story as far as Watts is concerned. In some of his hymns it is clear that, though wrath and mercy meet at the cross, it is not in irreconcilable opposition.

Thus:

2. Here thy revenging justice stands
And pleads its dreadful cause;
Here saving mercy spreads her hands
Like Jesus on the cross.

Indeed, the initiative comes from the Father:

2. So strange, so boundless was the love
That pitied dying men,
The Father sent his equal Son
To give them life again.
3. Thy hands, dear Jesus, were not armed
With a revenging rod,
No hard commission to perform
The vengeance of a God.
4. But all was mercy, all was mild,
And Wrath forsook the throne
When Christ on the kind errand came
And brought salvation down.⁷¹

Watts's doctrine on this point reaches its highest expression in "Nature with open volume stands", a hymn rescued from neglect by *Congregational Praise* (1951) and *Hymns & Psalms* (1983). Here are the first five verses, including his original fourth verse, which is now invariably omitted:

1. Nature with open volume stands
To spread her Maker's praise abroad,
And every labour of her hands
Shows something worthy of a God.

2. But in the grace that rescued man
His brightest form of glory shines:
Here on the cross 'tis fairest drawn
In precious blood and crimson lines.
3. Here his whole name appears complete;
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,
Which of the letters best is writ,
The power, the wisdom, or the love.
4. Here I behold his inmost heart
Where grace and vengeance strangely join,
Piercing his Son with sharpest smart
To make the purchased pleasures mine.
5. O the sweet wonders of that cross
Where God the Saviour loved and died!
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From his dear wounds and bleeding side.

Watts, it seems, is concerned not only to affirm that Christ suffers on the cross in his Deity, but also to show that the cross displays God's nature of power, wisdom and love. This aspect is present to an even more marked degree in Charles Wesley. As one of Wesley's hymns, still sung, declares:

Now discern the Deity,
Now his heavenly birth declare;
Faith cries out: 'Tis he, 'tis he,
My God that suffers there!⁷²

Here we have, not "God the Saviour", but "my God". Can one say that God suffers on the cross? If so, what does it mean (since such a statement is necessarily paradoxical)? Before I go on to discuss this in detail (2.3), I shall try to relate Wesley's views on substitution to the questions which I raised above.

Was Jesus cursed by God?

The third question we raised was whether Jesus was made a curse for us by God. It is interesting that whereas Galatians 3:13 quotes Deuteronomy 21:22–23 in saying that Christ was made a curse for us, Deuteronomy has additionally "by God". Indeed, Paul significantly does not say that Jesus was cursed, only that he was "made a curse".⁷³ Similarly, when Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God", he does not say that Christ was made a sinner or made guilty.⁷⁴ Therefore we can interpret scripture by saying that Christ was made a curse in the sense that he embraced the fullness of human sin and wretchedness, but we cannot say that he was cursed by God.

Wesley regarded Jesus as bearing our curse, but he does not go so far as to say that God cursed him:

Thou my pain, my curse hast took,
All my sins were laid on thee...⁷⁵

The following lines actually refer to “the curse of God”, and might, indeed, suggest that God cursed Christ:

God over all, forever blessed,
A curse and sin for sinners made,
By a whole world of guilt oppressed,
Who hast the general ransom paid,
Redeemed us from the curse of God,
And bought the grace with all thy blood.⁷⁶

However, it is clear that he has in mind the passage in 2 Corinthians 5:21; and as we have just seen, Paul does not say in this passage that Christ was made a sinner or made guilty,⁷⁷ nor that God actually cursed him. It is likely that Wesley was fully aware of the distinction already noted between Galatians 3:13 and Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Finally, we must not forget that the subject of his verse is God, who has taken upon himself the curse imposed on mankind, and not the man Jesus.

Does the Atonement proclaim God's justice?

Our fourth point was this. If there was no transferred penalty, can the Atonement still be seen as a means by which God proclaimed his justice? Perhaps the best thing at this stage is to go back to the New Testament and look at some passages which are vital but have not yet been fully discussed. We have already, of course, looked at Romans 3:25, "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood". The context is to be found in verses 21–22 and 25b–26:

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...

He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

The second passage is also from Romans, from Chapter 8 and verses 3–4a:

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us...

The third is from Colossians, Chapter 2 and verses 13b–14:

He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

It seems clear from these passages that God wanted to demonstrate his justice in

justifying, or treating as righteous, those who have faith in Jesus Christ. This could only be done by a sufficient condemnation of sin in humanity, and simultaneously by the cancellation of the law by which we are condemned. The bulwark which appeared to protect God's righteousness was the law. How could those who had deliberately flouted the law, who had sinned "with a high hand", be forgiven? How could God be seen to forgive, yet not to condone? And the answer is that the Son of God should draw upon himself our sinfulness even as he forgave his enemies. As William Temple puts it:

Therefore the Cross, by showing what sin costs God, safeguards His righteousness while He forgives... St Paul regards the forbearance of God in the past as having imperilled His righteousness; but that righteousness is now fully vindicated by the Cross, which reveals the antagonism between God and sin.⁷⁸

And similarly:

God, in Christ, does not overlook wrongs that have been done, but takes them into Himself⁷⁹.

It is far easier to grasp the idea that God has punished someone in our place than to see God taking upon himself our sin and bearing its consequences. The former requires an exercise of the mind only; the latter is to be apprehended mainly in the heart, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The point is well put by George Carey when he writes:

What Christ does in some unfathomable mystery which lies beyond the reach of our language (although not our spiritual understanding) is to provide God's answer to the issue of justice.⁸⁰

This therefore becomes the "encapsulation" (to repeat the term used in Chapter 1) of a suffering God forgiving, but not condoning, the sin of the whole world.

And it is precisely the *divinity* of Christ which is the key to understanding the atonement. He dies, not as an innocent man to satisfy God, but as the very revelation of God himself. John Macquarrie writes:

Perhaps where there is infinite caring, there is a willingness to bear infinite suffering. The cross and passion are already there in God before the actual historical passion of Jesus of Nazareth.⁸¹

On similar lines, D M Baillie says:

While there is suffering (for human sin) in the life of God, it is eternally swallowed up in victory and blessedness, and that is how God "expiates" our sins, as only God could do.⁸²

And Eberhard Jüngel writes, "Faith recognizes the crucified man Jesus as identical with God".⁸³

The Father is not merely he who sends his Son into the world that we might not perish, or who calls him to Calvary, but he who discloses in Jesus his own suffering for the world. Theologies of the Cross have often seen our substitute as the human Jesus: a perfect human, but essentially a man punished by God to deliver other men from their penalty. But Jesus is both human and divine. As a human being, he suffers for us as our

representative (as we shall see later in this chapter); in his divinity, he suffers for us as our substitute. As Brant Pelphrey writes in his book on Julian of Norwich, "Christ Our Mother":

Jesus' suffering was greater than ours could ever be in this life, because Jesus suffered *as God*. Furthermore, Jesus suffered the actual pains and despair of all human beings, in himself. He still continues to suffer today, even though physically he has risen from the dead and ascended, because of his compassion for us in the pains of our sin.⁸⁴

If we need a parallel in the life and ministry of Jesus, as distinct from his death, it can be found in the story of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3–11). As Sr Margaret Magdalen puts it,

His non-condemnation of the adulteress does not show an absence of moral standards. It simply reveals a true compassion *as though he had absorbed the woman's guilt and hurt feelings into himself*.⁸⁵

On this view, the cross becomes the encapsulation in history of the redemption of sin which is at the very heart of God. Julian of Norwich believed that all would be turned to God's worship and our endless joy: "All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well".⁸⁶ In heaven, sin itself "need be no shame, but can even be worthwhile".⁸⁷ In *The Man Born to be King*, Lazarus, restored to life, says:

This life is like weaving at the back of the loom. All you see is the crossing of the threads. In *that* life you go round to the front and see the wonder of the pattern.

Asked what the pattern is like, he replies:

Beautiful and terrible. And – how can I tell you? – it is *familiar*. You have known it from all eternity. For He that made it is the form of all things, Himself both the weaver and the loom.⁸⁸

Charles Wesley, of course, believed that there was a penalty which Jesus bore on our behalf. Nevertheless, he still saw the atonement as, among other things, a means by which God condemned sin, and proclaimed his justice. In his hymn "Saviour from sin, I wait to prove"⁸⁹, Charles wrote a verse (now omitted) which makes a direct reference to Romans 8:3, "God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (KJV):

Didst thou not in the flesh appear
Sin to condemn, and man to save?

So far as he is concerned, therefore, our question can be answered in the affirmative.

If there was no transferred penalty, can the word "substitute" still have meaning?

This was our fifth question. I stressed at the beginning of this chapter that the theory of substitution could embrace a number of attitudes, and those scholars (like Dr George Carey) who use the term "substitute" of Jesus make it clear that it is wrong to see Father and Son as acting independently, or the Father's attitude as anything other than love. Indeed, Carey writes:

Such is the direct involvement of the Father in the work of salvation that if we talk of "ransom", it is clear that it is *God* who is doing the ransoming; if we talk of "reconciling", then it is *God* who is doing it; if we talk of "substituting" then it is *God* who is there in the offering of his Son.⁹⁰

Is there, therefore, a way in which we can talk of "substitution" without avoiding these pitfalls? It is not disputed that the death of Jesus on the Cross released us from the law of sin and death, and to that extent he died on our behalf; he suffered for our sins. It is therefore legitimate to say that he was our substitute. As James Denney says:

If Christ died the death in which sin had involved us – if in his death he took the responsibility for our sins upon himself – no word is equal to this which falls short of what is meant by calling him our substitute.⁹¹

And Professor Colin Gunton, who expressly repudiates a penal approach, sees no difficulty in saying that "substitution is *grace*".⁹²

We have seen that Charles saw Christ as our substitute and used "reckoning" language, though not as explicitly as Toplady. Sin or guilt is laid on Christ, but Charles is content to remain with the scriptural language, and an element of mystery still remains: there is no simple QED for any single theory of atonement. And even in his acceptance of substitution, he is clear that it is God who is doing the substituting, in the offering of his Son.

The prerequisite of God's forgiveness, or its effect?

Sixthly, we need to ask whether the Atonement was the prerequisite of God's forgiveness, or its effect. Some would hold that God could not forgive sin until sufficient recompense had been paid to him in the form of Christ's suffering and death; on the other hand, others would argue that a forgiveness which demands a "pound of flesh" is not real forgiveness at all.

We need here to be clear on what we mean by forgiveness. Does it mean simply the setting aside of hostility, and embracing an attitude of love towards the offending party?

Or does it mean the complete restoration of relationships? In *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, Vincent Taylor argues that "in every New Testament passage where forgiveness is actually mentioned it appears to denote the removal of the barriers to fellowship rather than reconciliation itself",⁹³ though he believes that it is preferable to use the word in its established modern sense of full restoration to fellowship with God.⁹⁴ He continues:

To affirm that Christ died that we might be forgiven, is unscriptural, if we are thinking of the remission of sins; it is totally misleading, if by the forgiveness of sins we mean the restoration of sinners to the joy of fellowship with God... From first to last reconciliation is the work of God in Christ, and the same must be said of forgiveness if it is interpreted as restoration of fellowship with God.⁹⁵

And MacLeod Campbell puts the point very succinctly when he says:

But if God provides the atonement, then forgiveness must precede atonement; and the atonement must be the form of the manifestation of the forgiving love of God, not its cause.⁹⁶

Clearly there must be the greatest possible danger, if we hold that "He died that we might be forgiven",⁹⁷ in separating the purpose of Father and Son in the Atonement. It would then follow that the Father needs to be propitiated, while the Son in his mercy acts to reconcile the Father to us. And this is contrary to both scripture and the true meaning of a Trinitarian faith.

Wesley many times writes as if Jesus had turned God from anger towards us into mercy. We remember the lines in "Father, let the sinner go"⁹⁸:

2. Can thy justice aught reply
To our prevailing plea?
Jesus died thy grace to buy
For all mankind, and me;
Still before thy righteous throne
Stands the Lamb as newly slain;
Canst thou turn away thy Son,
Or let him plead in vain?

However, the emphasis is not so much on the Father's anger, or his demand for satisfaction, as on the certainty that we are saved by the blood of Christ. No matter how evil we have been, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence. The wrath of God, or the need for sacrifice, is at all times subordinate to his grace in sending his Son for our redemption. One is tempted to quote "Father, whose everlasting love/ Thy only Son for sinners gave"⁹⁹ were it not for the fact that Henry Bett ascribed this hymn to John (though no-one seems to have followed him). One hymn, however, which is indubitably Charles's, puts the Father's grace in full perspective:

1. Father, see this living clod,
This spark of heavenly fire,
See my soul, the breath of God,
Doth after God aspire:
Let it still to heaven ascend,
Till I my principle rejoin,
Blended with my glorious end,
And lost in love divine.
2. Lord, if thou from me hast broke
The power of outward sin,
Burst this Babylonish yoke,
And make me free within;
Bid my inbred sin depart,
And I thy utmost word shall prove,
Upright both in life and heart,
And perfected in love.
3. God of all-sufficient grace,
My God in Christ thou art;
Bid me walk before thy face,
Till I am pure in heart;
Till, transformed by faith divine,
I gain that perfect love unknown,
Bright in all thine image shine,
By putting on thy Son.
4. Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
In council join again,
To restore thine image lost
By frail, apostate man;
O might I thy form express,
Through faith begotten from above,
Stamped with real holiness,
And filled with perfect love.¹⁰⁰

Here, in a nutshell, is the Wesleyan message: that the Father sent his Son in order that we might regain the image of God lost in Adam, and be filled with perfect love.

Wesley's contemporaries do not seem to state explicitly that the Father must be satisfied before he can forgive. However, we still sing Isaac Watts's lines:

His powerful blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.¹⁰¹

and in hymns which, not surprisingly, we no longer sing, he depicts the Father's attitude as altered by the suffering and death of Christ:

*Father, he cries, forgive their sins,
For I my self have died;
And then he shows his opened veins,
And pleads his wounded side.*¹⁰²

1. Well, the Redeemer's gone
To appear before our God,
To sprinkle o'er the flaming throne
With his atoning blood.

3. Before his Father's eye
Our humble suit he moves,
The Father lays his thunder by,
And looks, and smiles, and loves.¹⁰³

Yet this was from the same hand as wrote "Nature with open volume stands" (*Hymns & Psalms* 174: see page 44 above), and it would be wrong to construe it too literally as showing that God was angry and needed to be won over to our side.

Propitiation, or expiation?

Our seventh (and final) question was whether the Atonement was the means by which God was propitiated, or by which sin was expiated. It will be the former if "God's wrath" was his personal attitude towards us, then he needed to be propitiated or appeased; but we have seen that this sets at odds the attitudes of Father and Son, and is contrary to a fully Trinitarian approach to the doctrine. Likewise we have seen that in the crucial passage, Romans 3:25, "expiation" seems to fit the usage better.¹⁰⁴ We can repeat the quotation from J S Whale, in *Victor and Victim*, that "in no case is Yahweh the object of the verb. He is always its subject. That is, there is no evidence for a statement or hint that God is 'propitiated', as that word is conventionally used. He is always the first mover in the work of reconciliation".¹⁰⁵ And G Henton Davies, in his Torch Bible Commentary on Exodus 30:10,¹⁰⁶ writes: "The Hebrew verb means, with man as subject, to propitiate, but, with God as subject, to forgive". Rightly read, then, neither the Old Testament nor the New gives grounds for thinking that the attitude of God can be in any way altered by a sacrifice made to him. Commenting on the offerings to God prescribed in the book of Numbers (Num 15:22-31), Walter Riggans writes:

It must be made clear that the forgiveness is not because of any inherent cause and effect relationship between the priest's actions and words and the fact of forgiveness. The ground of forgiveness is the free grace of God (see 14:18 ["the Lord is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression"]), and the sacrifice is God's ordained means to remove the barrier to the action of God's grace. Professor Davidson puts it well: "None of the prophets, not even Ezekiel, refers to sacrifice as the means to atonement for the sins of the people; God forgives of his grace and mercy alone".¹⁰⁷

Accordingly, it is in full conformity with biblical thought to interpret Romans 3:25 as meaning that God was himself providing a means by which sin could be "expiated" or removed. (It is interesting that the alternative reading in the NIV is "as the one who would turn away his wrath, *taking away sin*").

We have seen that Wesley speaks of the wrath of God, and of his being reconciled to us:

My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, it is equally true to say that God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself (2 Corinthians 5:19):

Mystery of amazing grace!
Heaven's offended majesty
Sues to the offending race,
Pray be reconciled to me,
Me, who all your evil know,
Me, already pacified,
Me, who lived a man of woe,
Me, who for my rebels died!¹⁰⁹

Perhaps, then, God only “sues to the offending race” when he *has* been pacified, or propitiated - in which case the initiative lies with Christ? No, for we can go further and show that the initiative is taken by the Godhead:

God was in Christ, the eternal Sire
Revealed in the eternal Son,
Jehovah did on earth expire,
For every soul of man to atone.
The one almighty God supreme,
Jehovah lavish of his blood
Poured out the inestimable stream,
And reconciled the world to God.¹¹⁰

In the end, it is God himself who atones, and if he atones, then he expiates:

On both thy Natures we rely,
Neither can save alone;
The GOD could not for sinners die,
The Man could not atone.
The merit of a suffering GOD
Hath brought our perfect peace,
It stamped the value on that blood,
Which signed our souls' release.¹¹¹

A very similar thought is contained in the hymn below:

1. Very man, and very God,
Thou hast bought us with thy blood:
Two distinguished natures we
In thy single person see,
God and man in thee alone
Mix inseparably one.
2. How could God for sinners die?
How could man the pardon buy?
When thy human nature bled,
Then the blood Divine was shed,
Blood of him who was in thee
God from all eternity.¹¹²

In summing up, we can concede that the concept of substitution and propitiation is valuable in removing the pangs of conscience and feelings of guilt which I have attributed

to the “wrath of God” (understood as the mechanism by which God conveys his antipathy towards sin). It is indeed valuable, as long as there is no pretence that God’s attitude towards us was one of anger, or that Christ reconciled him to the world. But that is as far as it goes; and it is unfortunate that a gospel of grace has so often been forced into a strait-jacket of legal fictions and accountancy concepts. In other words, religious man’s inherent bias towards seeing everything in terms of law, of earning and merit, of reward and punishment, has triumphed, while the gospel of grace, of God loving the unlovable and forgiving the unforgivable, has been obscured. Most Christian theologies have accepted that we cannot earn our own salvation; but they have been tempted to see it as somehow earned by the sufferings of Christ, or by our re-presentation of his sacrifice. Professor Lampe writes:

St Paul...saw that the reconciliation of the world to God, effected by Christ, meant that the principle of law had been replaced by spontaneous and undeserved love. God’s acceptance of man is not conditional upon anything that man may do. It is unrelated to justice, and it takes no account of merit or demerit. It is entirely paradoxical and contrary to all ordinary notions of reward and punishment. It means the abandonment of legalism in men’s relationships to God and their attitude to one another, for the essence of such legalism is the belief that man is treated by God on the ordinary principles of human justice and within a relationship like that of a master to a slave or a judge to a defendant...

St Paul realized the essential truth that the act of God in Christ had taken the whole question of man’s relationship to God out of this area. It had done so because that relationship was now determined solely by the love of God.¹¹³

It is in juridical theories of the atonement, he continues, “where we see justice enthroned as God”, “the theology of satisfaction sets the atonement within the sphere of law and perverts the central message of the gospel”.¹¹⁴

A further point which must be made is that, although the substitutionary theory has traditionally laid great emphasis on the magnitude of sin, and God’s antipathy towards it, it clearly offers no solution. For we are still sinners, whether Christ is punished for our sins or not; and we are still sinners, even if Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. If God cannot abide sin, then he cannot abide us either. It is one of the very great merits of Charles Wesley’s theology, along with that of the Church Fathers, that he offers a solution to this problem.

In short, it is essential for our theology that God can forgive (and in past times had forgiven) without the precondition that Jesus suffer on the Cross, and that his suffering is simply a condemnation of sin, not a penalty laid upon Jesus. God, in Christ, expiates our sin; Jesus does not propitiate God. And it is also essential that the suffering which we see

in the Cross should be the suffering of God himself.

We can therefore see Charles Wesley as a man of his age, apparently accepting uncritically the view that God was angry with us, and had to be propitiated by his Son's sacrifice on the cross; and yet in his sublimer moments he rises above this to proclaim God's everlasting love, and the oneness of the action of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As we have seen, Watts shares the same approaches. By way of contrast, Toplady is more legalistic. Perhaps there is a modern analogy in the way we treat intercessory prayer: we fully accept that God knows our needs before we ask him, and has promised to give us such good things as we need, yet our prayers generally read as if he needed either to be reminded or persuaded. It would be quite wrong for someone 250 years hence to form a judgement on our theology of prayer simply by looking at the Alternative Service Book's Alternative Forms of Intercession, Section 81, Version B, which consists of a series on imperatives followed by "Hear us, good Lord".

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

In the first part of this Chapter, I discussed the doctrine of penal substitution, namely that, to satisfy the justice of God, a penalty had to be paid by man; and that as we are unable to pay that penalty, it was assumed by Jesus in our stead. That view is in great danger of dividing the love of Jesus from the justice of God, and of descending into a theology of artificiality, where our sin is imputed to Christ, and his righteousness imputed to us. Likewise it is in danger of seeing the grace and forgiveness of God as being bought for us by the action of Jesus, instead of being "divinely free", in Charles Wesley's own terms. I noted there that, while scripture speaks frequently of Jesus suffering *on our behalf*, it nowhere states that he suffered *instead of* us, and neither does it speak of transferred punishment or penalty.

As we have seen, Wesley does not entirely avoid the dangers. He certainly believed that the Father punished Jesus, and that Jesus suffered his wrath. He even refers in more than one place to the purchase of God's grace.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, it is clear to him that the Father and the Son act together in the work of salvation. To repeat the lines from "Father, see this living clod/This spark of heavenly fire":¹¹⁶

4. Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
In council join again,
To restore thine image lost
By frail, apostate man...

Furthermore, he is clear that the Jesus who dies on the Cross is fully divine. In his Hymns on the Lord's Supper, no. 12 begins "Jesu, suffering Deity",¹¹⁷ and similarly verse 2 of no. 18 runs:¹¹⁸

See the slaughtered sacrifice,
See the altar stained with blood!
Crucified before our eyes
Faith discerns the dying GOD...

Likewise, he writes:

... Ah, shew me in darkness and pain
The heart of a crucified God.¹¹⁹

I have already referred to "'Tis finished! The Messiah dies".¹²⁰ But, after writing

'Tis finished! All the debt is paid;
Justice divine is satisfied;
The grand and full atonement made

Wesley makes it clear that this is not a payment made to God, but by God:

God for a guilty world hath died.

The point will, however, be most familiar to us in verses which we still sing ("God of unexampled grace", Hymns & Psalms 166):¹²¹

2. Endless scenes of wonder rise
From that mysterious tree,
Crucified before our eyes
Where we our Maker see;
Jesus, Lord, what hast thou done?
Publish we the death divine,
Stop, and gaze, and fall, and own
Was never love like thine!
3. Never love nor sorrow was
Like that my Saviour showed;
See him stretched on yonder cross,
And crushed beneath our load!
Now discern the Deity,
Now his heavenly birth declare;
Faith cries out: 'Tis he, 'tis he,
My God, that suffers there!¹²²

That it was the immortal God who suffered and died was part of Charles's message from the first days of the Revival. On 16 May 1739 he writes in his Journal:

I prayed by Mrs Cameron, who owned herself convinced. She had been a Deist, because it is so incredible that Almighty God should die for His creatures.¹²³

Hence, perhaps, his lines:

Vilest of all the apostate race,
Who dare your God deny,
Arians, your God did in your place,
In yours, ye *Deists*, die.¹²⁴

Ordinary believers seem to have accepted this same message:

Again the enemy would suggest, "What! God die! It cannot be: do not deceive your soul."¹²⁵

At first sight this appears to be a strikingly modern statement. For example, the idea that God dies on the cross has become the cornerstone for a post-Auschwitz theology. We think, for instance, of the scene in Elie Wiesel's book *Night*, where a young boy is hanged with two adults in a concentration camp. The adults were soon dead, but the boy's body pulled much more lightly on the noose.

For over half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes were not yet glazed.

Behind me, I heard the same man asking: "Where is God now?", and heard a voice behind me answer him: "Where is he? Here He is hanging here on this gallows".¹²⁶

The concept of a suffering God is a valuable one, and we have rightly reacted against the God of the philosophers who is incapable of suffering. I referred in Chapter 1 (page 8) to Moltmann's question, "How can the ways of a God of holy love be justified before a suffering humanity?" Alister McGrath writes:

The inadequacies of the "classical theist" position have long been known. For... Pascal, it was necessary to encounter the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the God of the philosophers". Because God never changes, he never does anything - he shows no signs of life and is to all intents and purposes dead. The Christian tradition unhesitatingly speaks of a God who *loves* sinners, and it is not prepared to surrender this hard-won insight because the God of classical theism cannot be said to "love" in any meaningful sense of the term. The Christian tradition is saturated with the idea of a God who *acts*, who *loves*, who *gives* - and who *suffers*. This idea is far removed from Aristotle's Unmoved Mover (unmoved emotionally as well as physically!) who is wholly unconscious of the world, serene and unmoved by its pain and suffering.¹²⁷

That is well said, though I doubt whether the Church has historically distanced itself from the God of the philosophers as much as McGrath implies, and there is further discussion on this in Chapter 7. St Augustine's famous dilemma ("If God cannot prevent evil, he is not omnipotent; if he can but does not, he is not even good") has always exercised it.

But we should not be too hasty in welcoming Charles Wesley as a man of our own generation in this respect. He may write, "Hear the loud cry of Jesus' blood/ And save us by the death of God",¹²⁸ but his views could not be further from the "Death of God" theology of the 1960s. His belief in penal substitution was equally part and parcel of his theology. We may want to ask whether his views changed over course of time, but the answer is in the negative. In the earliest hymn book, that of 1739, we read:

Yet him the Almighty Father's will
With bruising chastisements pursued,
Doomed him the weight of sin to feel,
And sternly just required his blood.¹²⁹

But equally, in the hymn "Saviour, the world's and mine"¹³⁰ he writes:

Tis done! My God hath died!

Thus the two concepts, of substitution and of God dying for us, are present even at this early stage.

So we have to ask, what did Wesley mean when he said that God had died? Clearly such words can only be used paradoxically: as he himself wrote :

3. On both thy natures we rely,
Neither can save alone:
The GOD could not for sinners die,
The Man could not atone.¹³¹

We can, I think, dismiss the explanation that he thought the Father died on the cross (the Patipassian heresy): Wesley was studiously orthodox in his theology, quite apart from his substitutionary views. This seems to leave us with two possible approaches. The first is that he is simply emphasising the divinity of Jesus to show the magnitude of our sin in crucifying him. The second is that everything that can be said about the attitude of the Son can be said about the attitude of the Godhead also.

Before re-examining Wesley's hymns to decide which of these approaches is correct, it may be helpful to put the question in context by looking at some other eighteenth-century hymn writers.

Few other hymn writers of the same period speak of the cross as revealing God's suffering love. Isaac Watts nevertheless has a hymn (already referred to), "Nature with open volume stands",¹³² in which verses 3 and 4 run:

3. Here his [God's] name appears complete;
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,
Which of the letters best is writ,
The power, the wisdom, or the love.
4. O the sweet wonders of that cross
Where God the Saviour loved and died!....

William Cowper¹³³ has a beautiful hymn to wisdom called "Ere God had built the mountains".¹³⁴ In verses 1 and 2, wisdom speaks in the first person, but in verses 3 and 4 it is God who is addressed:

3. Thus wisdom's words discover
Thy glory and thy grace,
Thou everlasting lover
Of our unworthy race!

Thy gracious eye surveyed us
Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom thou hast made us,
And died for us in love.

4. And couldst Thou be delighted
With creatures such as we!
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted
And nailed Thee to a tree?
Unfathomable wonder,
And mystery divine!
The voice that speaks in thunder,
Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

Interestingly, the German Johannes Rist wrote a hymn c.1641 in which appear the words "Gott selbst liegt tot" ("God himself lies dead"; amended in later hymn books to "Gotts Sohn liegt tot", "God's Son lies dead"). This hymn influenced Hegel and seems to have been the origin of the phrase "Death of God" beloved of theologians in the 1960s.¹³⁵

It is however Toplady who most resembles Wesley in writing of God as suffering on the cross:

4. Saviour, how long shall men blaspheme,
And trample on their dying GOD?
From faithless pride O rescue them
And save them by thy slighted Blood!...
7. O JESUS, manifest thy grace,
Scatter thy mighty darts abroad;
Constrain the unbelieving race
To fall before a wounded GOD.¹³⁶

Even more striking, however, is Hymn I from An Appendix to his hymns:

1. Look back, my soul, and take a view
Of GOD expiring on the Tree:
Behold JEHOVAH breathe his last,
To buy eternal life for thee!
Thy Maker faints - "'TIS FINISHED," cries,
Reclines his sacred head, and dies.
2. Shadows and types are done away,
The Temple's veil is rent in twain:
Vanish, ye emblematic rites,
The *real* Victim now is slain;
Is slain for sinners to atone,
The Priest and Sacrifice in one.
3. Methinks I see the purpled earth
Startle to see its Maker's Blood;
The Sun retires, and from their graves
Saints rise to hail their dying GOD...

Notice the reference to Jehovah, the Maker, dying. But Toplady sees a very clear distinction between the roles, and indeed the attitudes, of Father and Son. He writes:¹³⁷

4. But O! No other Sacrifice
The Father's justice could appease;
Ten thousand worlds had died in vain,
Thy blood alone could buy our peace:
The GOD offended must be slain
To expiate the offence of man!...

Then, by using the credal words "The very God of very God", he stresses that he is referring specifically to the Son:

6. The world combined, with one consent,
To trample on the Great Supreme;
The very GOD of very GOD,
A Man of Sorrows here became,
And all who seek in heaven to reign
Must enter through the gate of pain.

In hymn XIV in the same collection, beginning "O thou who didst thy glory leave", verse 4 runs:

Ye saints, the Man of Sorrows bless,
The GOD for your unrighteousness
Deputed to atone...

Clearly Toplady is speaking only of God the Son, *deputed* by his Father to make atonement for the sins of the world.

Does this help us in understanding Charles Wesley's references to God dying for us on the cross? At first sight, we might take a reference to Jehovah as implying the Father or the Godhead, rather than the Son; but we have just seen that Toplady can write of Jehovah suffering for us, and yet maintain a sharp contrast between the roles and attitudes of Father and Son. Similarly the Rev Charles Perronet¹³⁸ could write, "Jesus is supreme Jehovah, who *laid the foundations of the earth...*", but also "in one undivided JEHOVAH, of Father, Son, and Spirit".¹³⁹

It is interesting that Dr Daniel Brevint (d. 1695), whose book *Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice* must have been known to the Wesleys, since it was abridged in the Preface to *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), refers to "that stroke of divine justice, that could not be satisfied but by the death of God!"¹⁴⁰ It is possible, therefore, that Charles was following Brevint here.

Modern Christians may find this approach bewildering. They are familiar with, but generally reject, the idea that Jesus was punished in his mortal flesh by an angry God whose justice had to be satisfied in this way before he could forgive. They can (on the other hand) accept that Father and Son acted together in our redemption, and the Father's

attitude was wholly one of love towards us. Yet here are Charles Wesley and Toplady apparently embracing both approaches. They assert in uncompromising terms that *God, Jehovah*, died on the cross for us, yet they write also of substitution, penalty, and wrath placated. If we ask whether Wesley modified his ideas during his life, the answer is, as we have seen, No.

Can we advance any explanation for this? We must remember the point I made at the beginning, that Charles was pouring out his experience: he was writing hymns, not Church Dogmatics. He finds parallels to his experience in scripture, and is continually using its images. No doubt these became coloured by tradition, so that the vicarious aspect of Christ's suffering was interpreted as penal substitution. This does not mean that they should be construed with literal rigour: perhaps just as the writer to the Hebrews picked up the Old Testament themes of sacrifice in his Letter (see Chapter 4) without believing in their efficacy, so Wesley picks up the conventional ideas of substitution and shows how much greater is God's work of salvation on the cross.

Nevertheless, it is clear from his hymns that Charles was a discerning theologian as well as a hymn writer. Precise doctrinal expositions are not the object of his hymns on the Atonement, but this is not to say that he sits loose to theology. In any case his *Hymns on the Trinity* (1767) set out his considered, and impeccably orthodox, views on that doctrine. E J Rattenbury, in *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*,¹⁴¹ draws attention to the careful distinctions which Wesley draws in the collection just mentioned, and from the examples he gives, three points emerge.

In the first place, each person of the Trinity is fully God.

And the whole Deity resides
In each of the mysterious Three.¹⁴²

Since "the whole Deity resides" in Christ, that is enough to allow us to say that God dies on the cross. (Equally, we can say that Jesus is the Spirit:

Jesus, thou art the Lord Most-High,
The praying Spirit thou art,
Enter, and Abba Father, cry
Incessant in my heart.)¹⁴³

The Deity of Christ is stated again in Hymn 53:¹⁴⁴

God did the testament injoin,
Which God confirmed with his own blood:
The Man who did his life resign,
Was proper, true, eternal God,

God indivisible, and One,
Jehovah's Fellow, and his Son.

We must not conclude from the words "Jehovah's Fellow, and his Son" that Jehovah denotes only God the Father. In "Bridegroom of his Church, and Head"¹⁴⁵ he writes:

Different from the Father then
Is Christ another God?
No: Jehovah dwelt with me,
And bought us by his blood:
Christ the true Jehovah was,
And is, and shall be evermore:
God expiring on a cross
Let earth and heaven adore.

And similarly, in "God was in Christ, the eternal Sire"¹⁴⁶ he writes:

Jehovah did on earth expire,
For every soul of man to atone:
The one Almighty God supreme,
Jehovah lavish of his blood...

Both Father and Son are indeed Jehovah:

When Jesus from the dead he raised,
The Father glorified the Son,
Jehovah by Jehovah placed,
The eternal Partner of his throne.¹⁴⁷

In the second place, the persons of the Trinity are nevertheless distinct, and in the case of Christ it is the union of Deity and humanity which produces that distinctness.

Our heavenly Master is but One,
And Jesus is his name:
But Jesus the eternal Son
Is with his Sire the same:
The Spirit's glorious plenitude
Resides in Christ adored;
Each person doth the three include,
And each we call our Lord.
The natures both of God and Man
In Jesus' single person meet,
Never to be disjoined again;
So strict the union and complete,
That what of One is said, is true,
If spoken of the Other too.¹⁴⁸

Notice the emphasis in the second half on the union of the two natures in Christ.

The Nicene doctrine comes out also in another of these hymns:

Very man, and very God,
Thou hast bought us by thy blood:
Two distinguished natures we
In thy single person see,
God and man in thee alone
Mix inseparably One!¹⁴⁹

In the third place, it is the humanity in Christ which suffers.

The Partner of our flesh and blood,
As man, inferior is to God:
The lower part of Christ, the heel,
Was bruised, and did our sorrows feel:
But though he would his life resign,
His part superior is Divine,
And doth, beyond the reach of pain,
God over all for ever reign.¹⁵⁰

The roles played by each nature also emerge from this hymn.

How could God for sinners die?
How could man the pardon buy?
When thy human nature bled,
Then the blood Divine was shed,
Blood of him who was in thee
God from all eternity.¹⁵¹

I suggest that these lines become clearer when read in conjunction with verse 3 of "Jesus, in thine all-saving name"¹⁵² (which we have already encountered):

On both thy Natures we rely,
Neither can save alone;
The GOD could not for sinners die,
The Man could not atone.
The merit of a suffering GOD
Hath brought our perfect peace,
It stamped the value on that blood,
Which signed our souls' release.

Here, Wesley is saying that without the Incarnation there could be no salvation for us. God could not die on a cross, but equally man could not atone (that is, could expiate sin). It is the humanity of Christ, linked with his divine credentials, which achieve the act of salvation secured by the cross.

We can therefore say that Wesley would not have regarded the anger of the Father as set over against the mercy of the Son. Rather it is the case that the Father is wrathful, the Son is also wrathful; yet the Father is merciful, as is the Son. The Father requires satisfaction, yet he himself provides the sacrifice. It may well be significant that the wrath and judgement of God can be specifically the wrath of Jesus. In "Glorious Saviour of my soul",¹⁵³ verse 4 (alluding to Revelation 6:16, "...and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb") runs:

Yet thy wrath I cannot fear,
Thou gentle, bleeding Lamb!
By thy judgment I am clear,
Healed by thy stripes I am;
Thou for me a curse wast made,
That I might in thee be blest;
Thou hast my full ransom paid,
And in thy wounds I rest.

Likewise, Wesley writes:

Lord, and is thine anger gone?
And art thou pacified?...
To the cross, thine altar, bind
Me with the cords of love.¹⁵⁴

Thus what is true of the Father is equally true of the Son. Wesley seems to have accepted to the full the statement of St Paul in Colossians 1:19 that God "was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him", that is, in Christ. Doubtless he was aware of the Vulgate translation, "quia in ipso complacuit omnem *plenitudinem* habitare", for he writes, in the hymn "The day of Christ, the day of God":¹⁵⁵

The day of Christ, the day of God,
We humbly hope with joy to see,
Washed in the sanctifying blood
Of an expiring Deity,
Who did for us his life resign;
There is no other God but one;
For all the plenitude divine
Resides in the eternal Son.

There is no doubt that Wesley's doctrine of substitution speaks ultimately of the love of God, and not of his antagonism. If we look again at those words quoted earlier:

For what you have done
His blood must atone;
The Father hath punished for you his dear Son.¹⁵⁶

it will be clear that the stress is on the Father's initiative, not on Christ's; on the Father's love for the Son, not on his separation; on the fact that it was "for you", in his grace and mercy. The tensions between justice and love are contained and resolved within the divine economy¹⁵⁷ of the Trinity. We can therefore answer the question posed earlier by saying that the references to God dying on the cross are not simply to stress the magnitude of our misdeeds in slaying the Son, but to declare that everything that Jesus did at Calvary was equally the action of the Godhead, and everything in the Father's attitude towards us was equally the attitude of the Son.

The following hymn sums up Wesley's doctrine:

God was in Christ, the eternal Sire
Revealed in his eternal Son,
Jehovah did on earth expire,
For every soul of man to atone:
The one almighty God supreme,
Jehovah lavish of his blood
Poured out the inestimable stream,
And reconciled the world to God.

The one, true, only God most high,
 Agent at once and patient was:
 As Man he did for sinners die,
 As God redeemed us by his cross:
 Jesus the general debt hath paid,
 God in the Person of the Son
 Amends to God the Father made,
 For Son and Father are but one.
 Father in Jesus reconciled,
 My Father if through him thou art,
 Acknowledge thine unconscious child,
 And hear his Spirit in my heart:
 One of the dear distinguished race
 For whom thou cam'st in Christ from heaven,
 I languish for thy gospel-grace,
 I long to know my sins forgiven.
 Thy Godhead whole was in thy Son,
 When Jesus prayed, and gasped, and died:
 The precious ransom was laid down;
 'Tis finished; I am justified!
 The Spirit of faith applies the word,
 And cries the new-born child to thee,
 Hail holy, holy, holy Lord,
 One glorious God in Persons Three.¹⁵⁸

It was God who reconciled the world to God ("God hath quenched the wrath of God", as we have noted elsewhere),¹⁵⁹ for God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Charles Wesley does, therefore, speak of the death of God on the cross, but this must be understood strictly within the context of the atonement. God provides a solution to the problem of human sin by rendering satisfaction for it within the economy of the Trinity, for God the Son dies in obedience to God the Father's will. Wesley believes in substitution, but God is his own substitute. Contrast this with the approach of modern theologians, who take a more cosmic view, and wish to see Christ's suffering as revealing the eternal suffering of God. In this way they attempt to answer the question posed by Jürgen Moltmann: "How can the ways of a God of holy love be justified before a suffering humanity?" We shall be looking at this again in Chapter 7.

2.3 Christ As Representative in Charles Wesley and Later Theology

I thirst to drink my master's cup,
Thy fiery baptism to know,
To take thy hallowed burden up,
Companion of the Man of woe.¹⁶⁰

Many present-day theologians have concluded from their surveys of New Testament teaching that Christ died as our *representative* rather than as our *substitute*.¹⁶¹ Far from being freed from suffering because he suffered, in a sense we become involved in his suffering. Conversely, instead of suffering in our place, to free us from a penalty (whether a legal penalty or, more loosely, the consequences of sin), he suffers with us. These theologians have almost certainly been repelled by the concept of a juridical penalty, and equally attracted by a Christ with whom we have solidarity. Their concern was anticipated over 200 years ago by William Law (1686–1761). Law considerably influenced the Wesleys by his book "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life", though there came to be serious theological differences between him and John. He wrote:

That the innocent Christ did not suffer, to quiet an angry Deity, but merely as co-operating, assisting and uniting with that love of God, which desired our salvation. That he did not suffer in our place or stead, but only on our account, which is quite a different matter. And to say, that he suffered in our place or stead, is as absurd, as contrary to Scripture, as to say, that he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven in our place and stead, that we might be excused from it. For his sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension, are all of them equally on our account, for our sake, for our good and benefit, but none of them possible to be in our stead.¹⁶²

Earlier still, Athanasius had written "when Christ died all human beings died in him", and "in offering himself to the Father Christ actually offered all of us to him".¹⁶³

In this century, William Temple put it thus:

For St Paul union with Christ is something so complete and intimate that whatever may be said to have befallen Him has befallen the disciple also; and this makes it for ever impossible to describe his doctrine as substitutionist.¹⁶⁴

And:

We plead His Passion, not as a transferred penalty, but as an act of self-sacrifice which re-makes us in its own likeness. Its work on us is not yet perfect.¹⁶⁵

I myself do not see the concepts of substitution and representation as mutually exclusive, but rather as reflecting the divinity and the humanity of Jesus respectively: when we talk of substitution, it is God himself, in the person of his Son, who suffers that we might live; and when we talk of representation, it is Jesus in his humanity with whom

we ourselves identify.¹⁶⁶ (It is of course true, as Charles Wesley wrote, that “the GOD could not for sinners die”, and equally true that it is the divinity of Jesus which enables us to identify with his humanity, as I shall be saying shortly.)

The idea of Jesus as representative resembles the "recapitulation" doctrine which we associate with Irenaeus (c130–c200). Irenaeus writes of the

one Lord Jesus Christ who came in fulfilment of God's comprehensive design, and recapitulates all things in himself...¹⁶⁷

As Mary Grey puts it in "Redeeming the Dream", part of the significance of the Atonement is

the repetition for us of the life of Jesus. In Christ was "recapitulated" or summed up all human actions and achievements, so, as he acted on our behalf, now we can share and be drawn into his actions.¹⁶⁸

The consequence for our lives of this "recapitulation" is that we can be divinised, transformed into the likeness of Christ by identifying with him in his sufferings. For this reason George Carey defines "recapitulation" as the doctrine "that Christ restored man to a greater glory than he would have had under the first Adam".¹⁶⁹

Vincent Taylor, in "The Atonement in New Testament Teaching", reviews the theology of St Paul and concludes that:

In all the circumstances it is best to avoid the word substitutionary and to describe the work of Christ as representative in character.¹⁷⁰

Likewise, after examining the remainder of the New Testament writings, he says:

...that, in some reputable sense of the word, Christ represents men in the eyes of the Father, is undeniably the teaching of the New Testament... Unless this finds a place in our theology, we are out of line with New Testament teaching.¹⁷¹

It is interesting that both P T Forsyth, lecturing in 1909, and Morna Hooker, lecturing in 1988–89, use the same distinctive word, "solidarity". Forsyth considers that Christ accepted God's judgement on us, that he confessed our sin to God. It was not his own sin, but that of the human race, with which he was in solidarity.¹⁷² We can pause here to remember that many present-day Christians feel the compulsion to confess the sins of their ancestors, as in the slave trade and the oppression of native Irish.¹⁷³ In so doing they attempt to rectify a wrong in history, and it may be that (in Jungian terms) such a confession has a healing effect on the collective unconscious. Then Forsyth goes on:

But would His acceptance of judgment for us be possible, would it stand to our good, would it be of value in God's sight for us, if He were not in moral solidarity with us?¹⁷⁴

This solidarity corresponds closely to the mystical relationship which St Paul discloses in his letters and which are referred to in more detail below. Forsyth goes on:

We see now how organic, how central to Christ's gospel of Atonement, is Paul's idea of dying and rising with Him... To die and rise with Christ does not belong to the Christian ethic, to the method of Jesus, but it has a far deeper and more religious meaning. It is to be taken into His secret life. It is a mystical incorporation into Christ's death and resurrection as the standing act of spiritual existence. We are baptized into His death, and not merely into dying like Him. We do not echo His resurrection, we share it. As His trophies we become part of Christ's offering to God....¹⁷⁵

Morna Hooker interprets Paul in the same way:

In Gal. 3.14 Paul jumps, without explanation, from his statement that Christ was made a curse to the affirmation that the Gentiles have received the blessing. How does one lead to the other? Again, some commentators have interpreted this in substitutionary terms; they have suggested that Christ and the believer change places. Paul's answer is, I believe, far more profound. But in order to understand his position it is essential to grasp the importance for him of the union between Christ and the believer... It is not, then, a case of Christ and the believer changing places, but of the believer sharing Christ's life. If Christ has been vindicated and raised from the dead, the same must be true of those who are united with him¹⁷⁶.

As Hooker claims, there are very clear references in the letters of St Paul to the mystical union of Christ with the believer:

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. (Romans 6:6).

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20).

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world... (Colossians 2:20).

Although this theme of incorporation in Christ has been somewhat neglected in the Church in favour of a purely substitutionary view of Christ's office, it figures in the alternative post-Communion prayer in the Book of Common Prayer:

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our saviour Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people...

- and, similarly, in the Exhortation:

then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.

The last quotation does not refer to any sharing in Christ's sufferings, but an early father of the Church, St Ignatius (martyred c 115) had referred to this aspect in his Letter to the Smyrnaeans:¹⁷⁷

I perceived that you are settled in unshakeable faith, nailed, as it were, to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in flesh and spirit...

R C Moberly paraphrases Ignatius's teaching as follows:

The first [thought] is that to possess Christ is to desire to suffer with him, or (in other words) that a voluntary sharing in the passion of Christ is the life of Christ in us; and the second, which is a corollary from the first, is that for us the effect of the passion is incomplete, until it finds a consummation within ourselves, - *our* penitence, *our* death, and therefore *our* life, and *our* resurrection through death.¹⁷⁸

The same approach occurs in Martin Luther ("The soul is nailed to the Cross with Christ"):

For even Christ was damned and abandoned more than all the saints. And his sufferings were not, as some imagine, light and easy. For really and truly he offered himself to eternal damnation to God the Father for us. And in his human nature he behaved in no other way than as a man eternally damned to hell. On account of such love to God, God at once raised him from the dead and hell and thus devoured hell. Whence it behoves all the saints to imitate him, some more, some less.¹⁷⁹

Dr Gordon Rupp, who quotes this, adds:

This leads Luther to an allied thought which he was to develop in the following years as an integral part of his "Theology of the Cross", the thought that the Christian shares the sufferings of Christ, and that therefore there is a hiddenness and contradiction about all his life on earth.¹⁸⁰

And in a recent book, "The Enigma of the Cross", Alister McGrath writes:

And just as we may see our own situation reflected in the exodus story, so we see our own situation reflected in the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our own secret doubts and apparent failure our fear of death, our sense of hopelessness and helplessness, to name but some themes... - all are illuminated, interpreted and transformed by the crucified Christ. The story comes to have a powerful *existential* significance.¹⁸¹

The cross is a key by which the ambiguities of human existence may be unlocked, casting light on the situation in which the Christian now finds himself in the world. Knowing that the one who was crucified was raised, and knowing that he himself has been crucified with Christ, the believer may make the crucified Christ the guiding principle of his life.¹⁸²

However, despite the scriptural references mentioned above, the concept of Christ as Representative is not without its critics. To more traditional scholars, it detracts from the unique and substitutionary nature of Christ's death. Karl Barth, while he uses the term Representative, clearly regards it as more or less synonymous with Substitute:¹⁸³ Christ's work stands alone and does not call for any identification by ourselves.¹⁸⁴ He writes:

When Paul says concerning himself in Galatians 2:20 that he no longer lives, but Christ lives in him, this does not mean that he identified himself with Christ, or gave himself out to be a second Christ. He at once interpreted the statement by that which followed: "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me". Paul himself did not take part - except in so far as he received it in faith as done for him - in this self-offering of Christ, which took place for him as one who was loved by Christ. He did not mean this when he said in the preceding verse (Gal 2:19) that he was crucified with Christ..., or in Gal 6:17 that he bore the marks (στίγματα) of the Lord Jesus, or in 2 Cor 4:10 that he bore about in the body the dying ...of the Lord Jesus... Both the text and the context of these sayings completely exclude any idea of an interchangeability of Christ and the Christian, the head and the member, the One who leads and the one who follows... But the suffering which comes on Christians, the cross to which they are nailed, the death which they have to die, is

always *their* suffering, *their* death, just as the salvation which accompanies it is their salvation, won for them and brought to them in the suffering and cross and death of Christ on their behalf (ἀντι πολλῶν). Their cross corresponds to the death of Christ. It does this with supreme realism. But it does not do more. It is not a repetition, or re-presentation, of the cross of Christ.¹⁸⁵

This does less than justice to the approach which we shall see in Charles Wesley, and which is attested to in experience by many Christians;¹⁸⁶ it suggests an exaggerated aversion to the mystical union of Christ and his disciple in suffering. A better perspective is given by Stephen H Travis:

First, "participation in Christ's death and resurrection" is a central theme in Paul's representation of Christ's death and its effect on humanity. When he talks about our being "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:19) or "buried with him by baptism into death" (Romans 6:4), he means that we enter into his obedience so that we may also share in his resurrection life. "Participationist" language such as this is far more frequent in Paul than language which might be understood as retributive in the sense discussed earlier.

But second, the formation of those sentences in the form, "Christ gave himself for our sins *so that* (1 Thess 5:9-10 etc) implies that in his death Christ achieved something objectively *before* the fruits of it were available to the subjective experience of those who have faith in him. Our "participation" in Christ crucified and risen *depends* on his first "dying for us"... The varieties of Paul's language about Christ's death cannot simply be collapsed into the theme of participation... Rather, it should be recognized that the varieties of expression find their unity in the idea of Christ as representative Man, who identifies with sinful humanity and with whom we may identify ourselves - in whose death and resurrection we may participate - through faith.¹⁸⁷

Other scholars, who would not themselves want to preserve the substitutionary nature of Christ's death at all costs, nevertheless find the concept of representation, of Christ being an inclusive or corporate personality, a difficult one. And yet this idea emerges very strongly in Paul: he uses in his letters the phrase *in Christ Jesus* 48 times, *in Christ* 34 times, and *in the Lord* 50 times.¹⁸⁸ To think in these terms may have been natural to people of Paul's generation, but can it be meaningful today? Professor C F D Moule, who had written¹⁸⁹ of "the striking way in which Paul's conception of Christ insists on his being an inclusive personality - one in whom believers find themselves incorporate", quotes the comment of Professor Cunliffe-Jones:

I find this conception of an inclusive and corporate personality extremely difficult to understand...the corporate inclusiveness of Jesus is even more difficult to me than the corporate inclusiveness of God - though I don't understand that either. On the basis of a Platonic or Neo-Platonic philosophy, I could understand the idiom. What does it mean in the intellectual context of the twentieth century?¹⁹⁰

Moule then reviews the evidence and arguments at considerable length, and observes:

In sum, parts at least of the Pauline epistles reflect an idea of Christ as a 'corporate Person', to be joined to whom is to become part of an organic whole. It is possible to argue that such an idea is already commonplace, when a pantheist like Seneca applies it to the cosmos, or in laudatory mood, speaks of an Emperor as the head of the body politic. But it becomes a new and extraordinary phenomenon when it is not a pantheist who is speaking, and when he speaks of a known individual of recent history as an 'inclusive' or 'corporate Person'. And, in this form, it represents a religious experience which is new, and which drives us to ask, Who is this; who can

be understood in much the same terms as a theist understands God himself - as personal, indeed, but more than individual?¹⁹¹

Finally, Moule sets out his conclusions on St Paul. He accepts Lady Oppenheimer's comment that such close, inclusive relationships "are not on the face of it compatible with common sense", but goes on:

Paul does seem to conceive of the living Christ as more than fully individual, while still knowing him vividly and distinctly as fully personal. He speaks of Christian life as lived in an area which is Christ; he speaks of Christians as incorporated in him. He thinks of the Christian community as (ideally) a harmoniously coordinated living organism like a body, and, on occasion, thinks of Christ as himself the living body of which Christians are limbs. All this is very puzzling; but one thing seems to emerge clearly from it: Paul, at least, had religious experiences in which the Jesus of Nazareth who had recently been crucified - this same person, without a shadow of doubt as to his identity - was found to be more than individual. He was found to be an "inclusive" personality. And this means, in effect, that Paul was led to conceive of Christ as any theist conceives of God: personal, indeed, but transcending the individual category. Christ is like the omnipresent deity "in whom we live and move and have our being" - to quote the tag from Acts 17:28 which is generally traced to Epimenides.¹⁹²

We can notice the reference in both those quotations to religious experience. Apart from such experience, the concept of Christ as an inclusive or corporate person is indeed puzzling. But if Christ had been experienced in the same way as God is experienced, then Paul's language is explicable. We should no doubt heed, in our context, Moule's comment that "representation is not inclusion";¹⁹³ but inclusion will certainly make it possible for the Christian to say that he or she is sharing in Christ's sufferings, and conversely that he is sharing in theirs.

Some theologians have regarded representation and substitution as identical, as Barth has done. But the critical difference is that what he does as representative must also be done *by us*, who are "in" Christ; what he does as substitute is done *instead of us*. Dorothee Sölle, paraphrasing Luther, writes:

Christ...regarded himself purely in the way God regarded him. What he is or has, his sinlessness or his blessedness, is nothing to him. How God deals with him is everything. This utter surrender to God's verdict forms the foundation of the representation which Christ performs for us. Christ does for us what we are incapable of doing. He surrenders himself to God. He does this provisionally in order that we may be able to do it too.¹⁹⁴

The word "provisionally" is important: it is not until his act is copied by Christians that it receives its fulfilment. This interpretation of representation is relevant also to the priesthood of Christ: she quotes Albrecht Ritschl:

If Christ by his observance secures his nearness, his priestly relation, to God, that includes the intention that the existing and the future community should reach the same position. That is to say, Christ as a priest is the representative of the community which he brings to God through the present fulfilment of his personal life. This use of representation is inclusive, not, as it generally is, exclusive. The meaning of the idea is not, that what Christ does as priest, the

community is not required to do; but rather that what Christ as priest does, first in the place and as the representative of the community, there the community itself has accordingly to take up its position.¹⁹⁵

Does, then, Charles Wesley see the death of Christ in representative as well as substitutionary terms? He begins one of his hymns thus:

Adam descended from above,
Federal Head of all mankind,
The covenant of redeeming love
In thee let every sinner find.¹⁹⁶

Federal theology, states the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, is "the system based on the doctrine of covenants made by God with Adam as representing mankind, and with Christ as representing the Church". In a paper entitled "The Notion of Adam's being a Federal Head, or Representative of Mankind, Considered", John Wesley wrote:

My reason for believing he was so, in some sense, is this: Christ was the representative of mankind, when God "laid on him the iniquity of us all, and he was wounded for our transgressions." But Adam was a type or figure of Christ; therefore, he was also, in some sense, our representative; in consequence of which, "all died" in him, as "in Christ all shall be made alive."¹⁹⁷

We can comment that the quotation from Isaiah 53 points rather towards substitution, but it is clear that *Adam* was not a substitute, and when we are saying that *in* Christ all shall be made alive, we are seeing him as our representative.

Charles may not use the word "solidarity", but he uses "Representative" at least once:

The King of saints, with glory crowned,
Among a crowd of sinners found,
Our Representative he makes
Himself, and our transgressions takes,
Baptized, to purge us from all sin,
To wash our lives and conscience clean.¹⁹⁸

This poem was written in the context of Christ's baptism (St Luke 3:21), where it is perhaps natural to think of him as Representative. Similarly, when Paul writes "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death",¹⁹⁹ he is using representational language.

Whatever words are used, the basic concept is clearly present. Certainly the unity of Jesus with ourselves is asserted in "Let the world their virtue boast"²⁰⁰ :

Jesus, thou for me hast died,
And thou in me shalt live,
I shall feel thy death applied,
I shall thy life receive.

And Wesley uses the concept of being “in Christ” in one very familiar context:

Alive in him, my living Head²⁰¹

As we are seeing, his language owes much to personal experience as well as to theology. In 1741 he wrote in his Journal:

May 3d. At Kingswood, as soon as I had named my text, “It is finished!” the love of Christ crucified so constrained me, that I burst into tears, and felt strong sympathy with Him in his sufferings. In like manner, the whole congregation looked upon Him whom they had pierced, and mourned.²⁰²

Likewise on 5 November 1740 he had written:

Many had fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, while I spoke to them in the words of St John.

Others, too, had similar experiences; Charles Perronet wrote:²⁰³

I seemed in my sleep to be often with Christ. I carried him an infant in my arms. I heard him speak. I walked with him, and saw him work miracles. I helped support him in his agony: saw him crucified, and was crucified with him.

In our present hymn book there is little about sharing in Christ's sufferings, though in *Hymns & Psalms* 750(2)²⁰⁴ Wesley begs:

Thy love for a sinner declare,
Thy passion and death on the tree;
My spirit to Calvary bear,
To suffer and triumph with thee.

Similarly, in *Hymns & Psalms* 622(3) (notice the words “Head” and “members”):

The promptings of our Head
The members all pursue,
By his good Spirit led
To act, and suffer too
Whate'er he did on earth sustain,
Till glorious all like him we reign.²⁰⁵

More familiar, of course, are the words:

Soar we now where Christ hath led,
Following our exalted head;
Made like him, like him we rise;
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies:²⁰⁶

but this hymn is popular as a general hymn on the resurrection rather than for the parallel between Christ's life and our own.

There is, however, much more in the older books. In “O thou who hast our sorrows borne”,²⁰⁷ he speaks of the sharing of the believer in Christ's death:

Now let thy dying love constrain
My soul to love its God again,

Its God to glorify;
And lo! I come thy cross to share,
Echo thy sacrificial prayer,
And with my Saviour die.

He remembers the words of St Paul in Galatians 5:24, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts":

The world to me is crucified,
And I who on his cross have died
To GOD for ever live.²⁰⁸

The same thought is coupled in "Let me alone another year"²⁰⁹ with Philippians 3:8, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ":

3. I now from all my sins would turn
To my atoning God;
And look on him I pierced, and mourn,
And feel the sprinkled blood;
Would nail my passions to the cross,
Where my Redeemer died;
And all things count but dung and loss,
For Jesus crucified.

The mystical incorporation of the believer in the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ is particularly marked in the hymn "In weariness and pain":²¹⁰

...O were I offered up
Upon thy sacrifice!
Who would not drink the sacred cup,
And die when Jesus dies!
Thou seest my heart's desire,
I would thy cross partake;
I long to be baptized with fire
And die for thy dear sake;
I long to rise with thee,
And soar to things above,
And spend a blest eternity
In praise of dying love.

He believes that this participation in the sufferings of Christ must be expected by all true Christians, and is the way to perfection. This is discussed further in Chapter 6, but it is worth mentioning here that John did not wholeheartedly accept his brother's view, as can be seen from his marginal comment on a hymn inspired by Mark 10:38 ("Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?"):

1. Saviour, who ask to reign with thee,
They ask (what yet they cannot know),
Thy cup of inward agony,

- Thy burden of external woe;
 With eagerness of blind desire,
 They ask reproach, and pain, and loss,
 They ask to be baptised with fire,
 And hang expiring on the cross.
2. Covered with outward sufferings here
 Thou wast, with inward sufferings filled;
 They mark thy perfect character,
 They show thee by thy Father sealed:
 The cross thou didst for sinners prove
 The lot of all thy followers is;*
 And leads us on to perfect love,
 And paves our way to glorious bliss.²¹¹
 * *Query. JW.*

The lines below are interesting in that they bring out the full original meaning of the word “sympathize” as “to suffer with or like another”, which has now become weakened by time:

Who would not in thy footsteps tread,
 Who would not bow with thee his head,
 And sympathize with God!²¹²

The same sense emerges as he sees Mary sharing in her Son’s suffering, and the believer sharing with her:

1. When Jesus languished on the tree,
 Full of sacred sympathy
 She shared the mortal smart,
 As dying with her dying Lord
 She felt the sharp prophetic sword
 That pierced her faithful heart.
2. Conformed to an expiring God,
 We who feel his sprinkled blood
 The same distress abide;
 And every soul that Jesus knows
 Partake his bitterest pangs and woes,
 Together crucified.²¹³

The following poem²¹⁴ appears to sum up all Wesley's teaching on this point:

1. In that suffering Son of man
 My true way to heaven I see:
 All who rise with thee to reign,
 First partake the cross with thee;
 They that let thee die alone
 Hope in vain to reach thy throne.
2. Yes, the sufferings of our Head
 Are in us endured again,
 All who in thy footsteps tread
 Vilified, rejected, slain,
 Every day thy lot receive,
 Die thy death, thy life to live.

3. Daily we ourselves deny,
Called to seek the things above,
Every passion crucify,
Worldly lust, and creature-love,
Follow by thy Spirit led,
Sink as free among the dead.
4. Then emerging from thy grave
That mysterious rise we know,
Know thy utmost power to save,
Life of God revealed below,
Token of the body's rise,
All the life of paradise.

The emphasis today would be much more on Christ's suffering with us than on our suffering with him: we remember the question raised by Moltmann and quoted in Chapter 1: "How can the ways of a God of holy love be justified before a suffering humanity?" Wesley does not say a great deal in answer to this question, but he clearly does see Christ as sharing in our own suffering. Here are some verses from a hymn, "Jesus we ask thy promised aid",²¹⁵ which he wrote for a woman in childbirth:

5. Before her weary eyes display
The bed where her Redeemer lay,
The Lamb transfixed and torn!
The place thou never canst forget,
Where thou hast paid our utmost debt,
And all our sorrows borne.
6. O let thy grief dry up her tears,
And while thy mangled form appears,
Thy visage marred with blood,
Let troubles, fear, and torture cease,
And all her happy soul confess
Her Saviour and her God.
7. Victorious, with thy cross in view,
By thine own travail bring her through,
The agonizing hour,
A living monument of praise,
A witness of redeeming grace,
And love's eternal power.

He also states the point more briefly in "O the grace on man bestowed!":²¹⁶

3. Our High-priest in heaven he lives,
Yet still afflicted is,
Touched most sensibly he grieves
At our infirmities,
Still with sympathetic woe
Suffers in his members' pain:
Let the foot be crushed below
The Head above complains.

Wesley is not entirely alone in using the theme of dying with Christ, for it emerges also in Toplady's hymns (despite their general emphasis on imputed righteousness rather

than Christian perfection). In "Redeemer, whither should I flee"²¹⁷ he writes:

3. Close to my Saviour's bloody tree
My soul, untired, shall ever cleave;
Both scourged and crucified with thee,
With Christ resolved to die and live;
My prayer, my great ambition this,
Living and dying, to be his.
4. O nail me to the sacred wood,
There tie me with thy Spirit's chain;
There seal me with thy fastening blood,
Nor ever let me loose again:
There let me bow the suppliant knee,
And own no other Lord but thee!

Perhaps this is not entirely surprising, since Toplady was a Calvinist, and our union with Christ is considered as of great importance in Calvin's *Institutes*.²¹⁸

I can sum up this section by saying that the theme of representation emerges strongly from Wesley's hymns (though much less so from the ones we still sing) and that it is a more popular one than substitution in modern theology. As far as the Christian life is concerned, there is much in the hymns which will appeal to those who will to join themselves in spirit to Christ on his cross, and a little which reflects his sympathy for them in their own sufferings.

Notes to Chapter 2

Hymns & Psalms 216 (*H&SP* 1739).

From "Jesus, who lived above the sky" by Ann Gilbert (1782-1866); verse 6 in *United Methodist School Hymnal*, no. 59. The hymn appears in *MHB* (146) but this verse is omitted. Quoted, without source, by W Russell Maltby, *Christ and His Cross*, Wyvern Books, Epworth Press, London, 1963, p 10 and 112. Dr Leslie Weatherhead quotes lines 3 and 4, again without attribution, in *A Plain Man Looks at the Cross*, p 83, Independent Press, London, 1945.

Institutes 2:16:10; see, however, the quotation from Vincent Taylor below.

Article XIII.

See Chapter 7, page 214, for fuller details.

William Law (1686–1761) had written his most famous book, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, in 1729, and this book considerably influenced the Wesleys, and also Dr Johnson. In about 1733, however, he began to study the mysticism of Jakob Böhme, and this was a major factor in turning John against him.

See John Wesley's letter of 6 January 1756 to Law (*Letters*, Volume 3, pp 332-370).

P T Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, Hodder & Stoughton, London 1910, p 146.

Vincent Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, MacMillan & Co, London 1948, p 211.

Morna Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, The Paternoster Press, Carlisle 1994, p 43. See, likewise, Professor J D G Dunn on p 49 of his article "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus" in *Sacrifice and Redemption* (ed. S W Sykes), CUP 1991.

J S Whale, *Victor and Victim*, Cambridge University Press, 1960, p 52.

ib. p 69.

ib. p 72.

Morna Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, The Paternoster Press, Carlisle 1994, p 86.

Frances Young however comments that it is "impossible to believe that the church's search for prophecies did not turn up this passage, and the story of Philip and the eunuch proves that it did". (*The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom*, The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation Ltd, 1979).

Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, Epworth Press 1940, p 59.

ib. p 59.

Daily Readings from William Temple, Mowbray, London, 1981, p 159.

ib. p 210.

PW Volume 4, p 371 (*H&SP* 1749): "All ye that pass by", verse 2.

See W R Maltby, *Christ and His Cross*, Wyvern Books, Epworth Press, London, 1963, p 11;

J E Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, Epworth Press, London, 1941, p 194. The 1889 *Primitive Methodist Hymnal* had replaced "punished" by "bruised".

PW Volume 1, p 149 (*H&SP* 1739): "Saviour, the world's and mine", v 1.

H&P 47(2) (*H&SP* 1742).

H&SP (1739), pp 44-48, verse 15 of hymn on Isaiah 53.

PW Volume 12 p 99 (*SH* 1762). The full text of this hymn is at Appendix A.

PW Volume 1, p 326 (*H&SP* 1740).

PW Volume 3, pp 306-7 (*HoLS* 1745).

H&P 46(2) (*H&SP* 1742).

Alan C Clifford, *Atonement and Justification*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, p 133.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778) was converted by a Methodist preacher but subsequently embraced extreme Calvinist views, and became "one of [John] Wesley's most intemperate and abusive critics" (*Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, p 604).

Toplady: *Petitionary Hymns* V.

Toplady: *Petitionary Hymns* XXXVII, "From thy supreme tribunal, Lord".

Toplady: *Occasional Hymns* XVI.

Institutes, 2:15:6.

John Wesley's letter of 6 January 1756 to him.

Letter to Mary Bishop 7 February 1778 (*Letters* vi 297).

Nevertheless, in his letter to the Moravian Church which appears at the beginning of his Journal for the period 1 November 1739 to 3 September 1741, he approves of "the excellency (in many respects) of the doctrine taught among you: your laying the true foundation, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself'..." *John Wesley's Journal* (Standard Edition, Vol 2:310).
 PW Volume 7 p 394 (PD 1772).

Tom Smail, *The Forgotten Father*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1980, p 129.

The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Fontana 1959, p 43, on Romans 1:18.

G B Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, OUP, London, 1976, on Eph 5:6.

George Carey, *The Gate of Glory*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1986, p 52.

William Temple, *Readings in St John's Gospel*, First Series, Macmillan, London, 1961, p 56.

St Augustine, in Henry Bettenson, *The Later Christian Fathers*, OUP 1972, p 220. It could be contended that only a balanced Trinitarian approach is likely to place the cross in proper perspective. If undue prominence is given to the Father, the cross will be primarily a setting-forth of his love, with little emphasis on Jesus as Saviour in the present as well as in the past. If undue prominence is given to the Son, the effect is either: (a) that the Son is seen as reconciling the Father to ourselves - a kind of "Mr Nice and Mr Nasty" theology; or (b) that the Son effectively takes the place of the Father, so that worship equals the praises of Jesus, and emphasis is on the risen, ascended and glorified Jesus rather than on his suffering, which becomes just an unfortunate episode in his life. If undue prominence is given to the Spirit, the gospel is likely to be one of blessing (healing, material prosperity, etc) rather than one of sharing in Christ's sufferings.

J S Whale, *Victor and Victim*, CUP 1960, p 39.

Taken from *Readings in Christian Theology*, ed. Peter Hodgson and Robert King, SPCK 1985, pp 181-184.

Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah*, 18.

John Wesley's Journal, 12 March 1743 (Standard Edition, Vol 3:69).

John Wesley's Journal, 29 July 1762 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:521)

Article I.

Professor Colin Gunton says: "Sin is not a personal affront to an anthropomorphically conceived deity; because he is impassible, he cannot be harmed, let alone offended by it" (*The Actuality of Atonement*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1988, p 96).

Stephen H Travis, *Atonement Today* (ed. John Goldingay) SPCK London 1995), pp 28-29.

William Law, *Works*, London, J Richardson, 1762, Vol 5:156.

PW Volume 4, p 371 (H&SP 1749): "All ye that pass by", v 2.

PW Volume 1, p 149 (H&SP 1739).

Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley, Volume 2, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1992.

PW Volume 13, pp 126-127, no. 3271 (SH 1762): "We have not an High-priest above", v 3.

PW Volume 7 p 107 (*Hymns for the Use of Families* 1767).

"Thou Man of griefs, remember me", PW Volume 13, p 129 (SH 1762).

Charles Wesley's Journal, 11 June 1738 (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 104f).

PW Volume 7, p 394 (PD 1772). Rattenbury however sees no particular doctrine reflected in such a phrase: "On the whole, I conclude in the hymn quoted [*Hymns on the Lord's Supper* 36] he is simply using a convention without much reflection" (*Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*, p 111). To me, on the other hand, it fits into the logical pattern of Wesley's thought.

PW Volume 7 p 215, (HT 1767).

PW Volume 9 p 67 (SH 1762).

Olney Hymns, 132.

John Cennick (1718-1755) was Wesley's first Local Preacher, but later became a Moravian. He is still remembered for "Ere I sleep, for every favour" (H&P 638).

Watts, Volume II, Hymn LXII.

Watts, Volume I, Hymn CXLII, based on Isaiah 53:6-9 and 12.

Watts, Volume II, Hymn XXXVII.

Watts, Volume II, Hymn LXXXIII.

Watts, Volume III, Hymn IV.

Watts, Volume II, Hymn LLXXVIII, "When the first parents of our race".

Watts, "Come, happy souls, approach your God", Volume II, Hymn CIII.

Verse 4 of H&P 166, "God of unexampled grace" (HoLS 1745).

Thus Stephen H Travis says *ib*, p 25: "But we can observe in his citation of Deuteronomy 21.23 Paul alters 'accursed by God' to 'cursed' (*epikataratos*). Is this because he wants to put a certain distance between Christ's experience of forsakenness and the thought that this is specifically inflicted by God?"

J S Whale, *Victor and Victim*, CUP 1960, p 72.

PW Volume 1, p 149 (*H&SP* 1739), "Saviour, the world's and mine".

PW Volume 13 no. 3156 (*SH* 1762).

J S Whale, *Victor and Victim*, CUP 1960, p 72.

William Temple, *Christus Veritas*, MacMillan & Co, London 1924, p 260.

William Temple, *The Church Looks Forward*, MacMillan & Co, London, p 168.

George Carey, *The Gate of Glory*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1986, p 140.

John Macquarrie, *The Humility of God*, SCM Press, London, 1978, p 66-67.

D M Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, Faber & Faber, London, 1961, p 199.

Quoted by Alister McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p 195.

Brant Pelphrey, *Christ our Mother*, DLT London 1989, p 84.

Sr Margaret Magdalen CSMV, *The Hidden face of Jesus*, DLT London 1994, p68; italics mine.

Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, Long Text, Chapter 32. (Penguin Classics edition 1966, Penguin Books, London, p 109).

Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, Long Text, Chapter 38. (Penguin Classics edition 1966, Penguin Books, London, p 118).

Dorothy Sayers, *The Man Born to be King*, Victor Gollancz 1945, p 214.

H&P 747 (*H&SP* 1742).

George Carey, *The Gate of Glory*, Hodder & Stoughton 1980, p 152.

J Denney, *The Death of Christ*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1902, p 103.

Colin Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1988, p 165.

Vincent Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, Macmillan, London, 1948, p 18.

ib p 26.

ib p 27.

Quoted by R C Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, John Murray, London, 1913, p 397.

H&P 178(3).

PW Volume 3, pp 306-7 (*HoLS* 1745)..

H&P 520 (1) (*HoGEL* 1741).

PW Volume 9, pp 2, 3, 18 and 64 (*SH* 1762 as four separate verses).

H&P 78(4).

Watts, *Hymns*, 2/2.

Watts, *Hymns*, 2/36.

Morna Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, The Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1994, p 43.

Op cit p 52.

SCM Press, London, 1967.

The Daily Study Bible: Numbers, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1983, p 123.

H&P 217, "Arise, my soul, arise" (*H&SP* 1742). These lines have been altered in the present version.

PW Volume 13 p 49, based on 2 Corinthians 5:20, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (*SH* 1762).

PW Volume 7, p 217 (*SH* 1768).

PW Volume 5 p 323 (*H&SP* 1749).

PW Volume 7 p 241 (*HT* 1767).

G W H Lampe, "The Atonement: Law and Love" in *Soundings* (Cambridge University Press 1962), pp 177-178.

ib, p 182 and 184.

PW Volume 3, pp 306-7 (*HoLS* 1745): "Jesus died thy grace to buy/ For all mankind, and me".

PW Volume 9, pp 2, 3, 18 and 64 (*SH* 1762 as four separate verses).

PW Volume 3, p 223 (*HoLS* 1745).

PW Volume 3, p 227 (*HoLS* 1745): "Lift your eyes of faith", v 2.

PW Volume 13, p 105 (*SH* 1762).

PW Volume 12, p 99 (*SH* 1762).

HoLS 1745.

- 122 Bathsheba Hall's Diary for Good Friday 1771 records, "I feel to-day, a solemn spirit; a sacred
awe brood over my soul. I seem to have a more realizing view than ever, of Jesus on the Cross.
And, 'Faith cries out, 'tis HE! 'tis HE! My GOD that suffers there'" (*The Arminian Magazine*,
Volume 4, p 148). It is interesting to speculate whether Wesley was influenced by Hebrews
2:10, which says that Jesus "was made perfect through suffering". "Made perfect" here carries the
meaning of completeness (as does his cry from the cross, "It is finished"). Therefore the
complete revelation of Jesus as the Son of God could only take place through his suffering, and
we can say, "Now discern the Deity, Now his heavenly birth declare...".
- 123 *Journal* (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 149).
- 124 *PW* Volume 5, p 121, "Jesu, thou all-redeeming Lord" (*H&SP* 1749).
- 125 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 15 (1792), p 473; the experience of Christiana Melenoir in
the 1760s.
- 126 Penguin Press, London, 1981, p 77.
- 127 Alister McGrath, *The Enigma of the Cross*, Hodder & Stoughton, London (2nd ed. 1996), pp
121-122.
- 128 Quoted by John R Tyson as Miscellaneous Manuscript Hymns 162, in *Charles Wesley on
Sanctification*, Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids, 1986, p 117.
- 129 *PW* Volume 1 p 80 on Isaiah 53.
- 130 *PW* Volume 1, p 149 (*H&SP* 1739): "Saviour, the world's and mine".
- 131 *PW* Volume 5, p 323 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 132 *H&P* 174.
- 133 See Chapter 1, note 144.
- 134 *Olney Hymns* 52.
- 135 See Alister McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford,
p 198.
- 136 Toplady, *Petitionary Hymns* XXIII.
- 137 Toplady, *Poems*, Appx V, "Judgement".
- 138 Charles Perronet accompanied John Wesley on his visit to Dublin in 1747.
- 139 Article in *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 4, p 276 and 277.
- 140 Daniel Brevint, *Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, ii.8.
- 141 E J Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, Epworth Press,
London, 1941, especially pp 142-145.
- 142 *PW* Volume 7, p 277 (*HT* 1767): "Baptized into one only name".
- 143 *PW* Volume 13, p 93 (*SH* 1762 on 1 Thess. 5:18).
- 144 *PW* Volume 7, p 240 (*HT* 1767).
- 145 *PW* Volume 7, p 211 (*HT* 1767).
- 146 *PW* Volume 7, p 215 (*HT* 1767).
- 147 *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, Volume 2, p 261; ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge,
Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1992.
- 148 *PW* Volume 7, p 231 (*HT* 1767).
- 149 *PW* Volume 7, p 241 (*HT* 1767).
- 150 *PW* Volume 7, p 232 (*HT* 1767).
- 151 *PW* Volume 7, p 241 (*HT* 1767).
- 152 *PW* Volume 5, p 322 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 153 *PW* Volume 3, p 10-11 (*HoGEL* 1741).
- 154 *PW* Volume 2, p 123 (*H&SP* 1742). This hymn is headed "After a Recovery".
- 155 *PW* Volume 7, p 243 (*HT* 1767).
- 156 *PW* Volume 4, p 371 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 157 I use this term advisedly: Wesley in *Trinity Hymns* 50 (1768) writes, "Triune God of pardoning
love? Thy divine œconomy/ All our thankful hearts approve/ Thee adore in Persons Three".
Wesley himself may well have taken the term from the Church Fathers: Irenaeus conceived
salvation as a divine economy (*Adversus Haereses*, III, 24,1), while Gregory Nazianzen believed
that the Father accepted Christ's sacrifice not asking for it or needing it, but because of the
"economy" (see Frances Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the
New Testament to John Chrysostom*, The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation Ltd, 1979, p 211.
See also Chapter 3, pages 89-90.
- 158 *PW* Volume 7, p 215 (*HT* 1767).
- 159 *PW* Volume 7, p 394 (*Preparation for Death*, 1772).
- 160 *PW* Volume 5 p 153 (*H&SP* 1742).

161 I say "many", because that is the conclusion from my reading; on the other hand, Professor
 J D G Dunn, in Chapter 5 of "Sacrifice and Redemption" (ed. S W Sykes, CUP, 1991),
 considers that the theme of representation "has been largely ignored or overshadowed in recent
 decades in New Testament scholarship, with the principal exception of M[orna] D Hooker" (op
 cit p 35).

162 William Law, *The Spirit of Love*, London 1752, p 85.

163 See p 92 of the article by George Dion Dragas "St Athanasius on Christ's Sacrifice" in *Sacrifice
 and Redemption* (ed. S W Sykes), CUP 1991.

164 William Temple, *Christus Veritas*, MacMillan & Co, London, 1924, p 261.

165 *ib*, p 264.

166 Thus Colin Gunton writes: "Because Jesus is our substitute, it is also right to call him our
 representative". (*The Actuality of Atonement*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1988, p 166).

167 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 16, 6.

168 Mary Grey, *Redeeming the Dream*, SPCK, London, 1989, p 111.

169 George Carey, *The Gate of Glory*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1980, p 159.

170 Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, Epworth Press, London, 1940, p
 87.

171 *ib*, p 175.

172 P T Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1910, p 150.

173 On 18 November 1994 the Archbishop of Canterbury shook the hand of the Taoiseach, Mr
 Albert Reynolds, and apologised for England's "brutal domination and crass insensitivity in the
 800 years of our relationship with Ireland" (*The Independent* 4 March 1995). Since then, the
 number of such international apologies has increased considerably.

174 P T Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1910, p 190.

175 *ib*, p 194-195.

176 Morna Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, The Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1994, p 33.

177 Henry Bettenson, *Early Christian Fathers*, OUP 1969, p 48

178 R C Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, John Murray, London, 1913, p 328. He refers to
 Ignatius's Letters to the Romans (Ch. 6), Magnesians (Ch. 5), and Smyrneans (Ch 5).

179 Martin Luther, quoted by Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God*, Hodder & Stoughton,
 London, 1953, p 190.

180 *ib*, p 190.

181 Alister McGrath, *The Enigma of the Cross*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2nd ed London 1996, p 25.

182 *ib*, p 33.

183 Barth "equates the terms substitution and representation through his use of the German term
Stellvertretung, 'place-taking'" (Colin Greene, in *Atonement Today* (ed. John Goldingay),
 SPCK London 1995), p 232.

184 See Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative* (trans. David Lewis from the German), SCM
 Press, London, 1967, p 89: "Barth equates representation and substitution", and "even cites
 Barabbas as an example of Christ's representation" (she quotes *Church Dogmatics* IV.1 230).

185 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G W Bromiley, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1956, Vol IV.2,
 p 600.

186 See, for instance, the way Sheila Cassidy describes her experience of being tortured under the
 Pinochet régime, "a curious feeling of sharing in Christ's passion", in *Audacity to Believe*,
 Collins, London, 1977, pp 193-194).

187 *Atonement Today* (ed. John Goldingay), SPCK, London, 1995, pp 36-37.

188 William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians*, Daily Study
 Bible, St Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1959, p 14.

189 In *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (London: SCM 1967).

190 Quoted, C F D Moule, *The Origin of Christology*, Cambridge University Press 1977, p 49.

191 *ib*, pp 86-87.

192 *ib*, p 95.

193 *ib*, p 87.

194 Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative* (trans. David Lewis from the German), SCM Press,
 London, 1967.

195 Albrecht Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1902; quoted by
 Sölle, op cit, p 78.

196 *PW* Volume 9, p 415 (*SH* 1762).

197 John Wesley, *Works*, Vol 9, p 302.

198 Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, Vol II, Kingswood Books,
 Nashville, Tennessee, p 87 (on Luke 3:21).
 199 Romans 6:3 (NIV).
 200 *PW* Volume 2, p 318 (*H&SP* 1742).
 201 "And can it be" (*H&P* 216(5); *H&SP* 1739).
 202 *Journal* (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 271).
 203 Letter in *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 2 (1779), p 203. For Charles Perronet, see note 138
 above.
 204 From *SH* (1762).
 205 *HoLS* 1745.
 206 *H&P* 193(4) (*H&SP* 1739).
 207 *PW* Volume 7, p 24 (*Hymns for Families* 1767).
 208 *PW* Volume 3, p 318 (*HoLS* 1745).
 209 *PW* Volume 7, p 396 (*Preparation for Death* 1772).
 210 Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, Vol II, Kingswood Books,
 Nashville, Tennessee, p 87 (on Luke 3:21).
 211 *PW* Volume 11, p 36, no.997 (*SH* 1762).
 212 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 4, p 332.
 213 *UPCW* Vol 3, p 83.
 214 Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, Vol II, Kingswood Books,
 Nashville, Tennessee, on Luke 9:22–23.
 215 *PW* Volume 7, p 65 (first published 1767).
 216 *UPCW* Vol 3, p 193.
 217 Toplady, *Petitionary Hymns* XXXI.
 218 See Derec Llwyd Morgan, *The Great Awakening in Wales*, Epworth Press, London, 1988, p
 171.

3. THE CROSS AS RANSOM AND VICTORY

Take the dear purchase of thy blood,
My Friend and Advocate with God,
My Ransom and my Peace;
Surety, who all my debt has paid,
For all my sins atonement made,
The Lord my righteousness.¹

One of the earliest attempts to account for the saving power of the cross was to see the death of Christ as a ransom. In St Mark's Gospel, Jesus says:

For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.²
The idea of Jesus *ransoming* us is a powerful and natural one: one of the hymns currently sung by Methodists contains the lines:

To know I am thy ransomed child,
Bought by thine own most precious blood.³

Here there is no attempt made to erect the metaphor into a doctrine. However, early Christian thinkers began to ask whom this ransom was paid to. The answer often given was "Satan". But one could not conclude that Satan had secured a victory in the atonement: it would be absurd to believe that he had retained Jesus in his power, even if as a *quid pro quo* he had relinquished his grasp on the human race. After all, Jesus had risen again from the dead! As a result, the atonement came to be seen as a victory over evil, in which the devil *thought* he had emerged victorious, only to find Jesus had eluded his grasp through the resurrection. This theory is best remembered for its metaphor of a baited hook, the human flesh of Jesus being seen as like a bait. Gregory of Nyssa wrote:

In order that the exchange for us might be easily accepted by him who sought for it, the divine nature was concealed under the veil of our human nature so that, as with a greedy fish, the hook of divinity might be swallowed along with the bait of flesh.⁴

It was a crude concept, soon discarded, but the idea that a victory had been won over the powers of evil was more lasting. It remained the principal theory until the time of Anselm, when theologians became increasingly attracted by the belief that the atonement was necessary in order to satisfy God's justice. The earlier theory is often referred to as the "classical", and the later as the "Latin" doctrine. The "classical" doctrine involves the whole Trinity acting together in harmony, but the "Latin" doctrine often appears to envisage separate roles for the Father and Son in which the Son provided satisfaction for the Father.

Ransom

The idea that Jesus, in his dying, acted as a "ransom" to release us, is found as early as the Letter to Diognetus (second or third century) which notes that God "himself took upon him our sins, himself gave his own Son a ransom for us".⁵ How, then, did the ransom work? Was God bought off, or the Devil? Origen (c 185–255) believed that it was the Devil who was deceived:

To whom was it paid? Certainly not to God; can it then be to the evil one? For he had power over us until the ransom was given to him on our behalf, namely the life of Jesus; and he was deceived thinking that he could keep his soul in his power; not seeing that he could not reach the standard required so as to be able to keep it in his power. So also Death thought that it had him in its power, but it had no power over him who became "free among the dead" and stronger than the authority of death, and so much stronger, that all who wish to follow him can do so, though overcome by death, since death has now no strength against them: for no one who is with Jesus can be seized with death.⁶

J E Rattenbury states that the Wesleys "had rejected the ransom theory of Origen".⁷ Although he brings forward no evidence on this point, I have found nothing to disprove the statement. Charles at least found ransom a congenial metaphor, though stripped of its associations with the devil. In a sermon preached to the University of Oxford on 1 July 1739, he said:

God in the mystery of our redemption hath so tempered his mercy and justice together, that He would neither by His justice condemn us without mercy, nor by His mercy deliver us clearly without justice or payment of a just ransom. And whereas it lay not in us to pay it, He provided a ransom for us which was the most precious body and blood of his most dear and best beloved Son Jesus Christ; who besides this ransom, fulfilled the law for us perfectly; and so the justice of God and His mercy did embrace together and fulfilled the mystery of our redemption.⁸

(Note the statement that God provided the ransom and that his justice and mercy combined to secure our redemption).

Allusions to ransom occur in his hymns, though not widely, and very often in conjunction with other images; this has also been noted by Randy L Maddox, though I am unable to agree with him that the ransom theme is much more prevalent in the Book of Common Prayer: the dominant theme there is surely that of satisfaction.⁹ The familiar "Victim divine, thy grace we claim"¹⁰ contains, in verse 2, the lines:

Thy blood is still our ransom found,
And spreads salvation all around.

Here, ransom is mentioned in the midst of a hymn whose metaphors are largely sacrificial.

Wesley does not appear to suggest anywhere that the ransom was paid to the devil.
(His contemporary Toplady is, by contrast, explicit on this matter:

Attacked by Satan's fell deceit,
May I remain unshook,
And, piercing through the gilded bait,
Descry the deep-laid hook.)"¹¹

There is, however, a hint in one of Charles's hymns that the ransom has been paid by the Son to the Father:

Father, behold thy dying Son!
E'en now he lays our ransom down,
E'en now declares our sins forgiven...¹²

Similarly, the hymn "My God, my God, to thee I cry"¹³ suggests that the Father is somehow "bought off" by its payment:

4. Tell me again my peace is made,
And bid this sinner live;
The debt's discharged, the ransom's paid,
My Father must forgive.

The metaphor of debt also appears:

He purchased our pardon,
Who died in our stead,
The uttermost farthing
Our surety hath paid.¹⁴

Similarly, the concept of ransom can appear with the redeeming of the world from the curse of God:

God over all, for ever blessed,
A curse and sin for sinners made,
By a whole world of guilt oppressed,
Who hast the general ransom paid,
Redeemed us from the curse of God,
And bought the grace with all thy Blood.¹⁵

The word "general" is used by Wesley as shorthand for "for all mankind" as distinct from "for the elect only", as in "To praise the Lamb who died for all/ The general Saviour of mankind".¹⁶ I have already commented, in Chapter 2, on the apparent absurdity of *buying* grace.

However, just as his doctrine of substitution accepts that God must atone and provide the sacrifice, so his broader view of the ransom is that it has been paid by God, and not by man to God:

Who can worthily commend
Thy love unsearchable!
Love that made thee condescend
Our curse and death to feel;
Thou, the great eternal God,
Who didst thyself our ransom pay,
Hast, with thine own most precious blood,
Washed all our sins away.¹⁷

And again:

Tremendous love to lost mankind!
Could none but Christ the Ransom find?
Could none but Christ the pardon buy?
How great the sin of Adam's race!
How greater still the Saviour's grace,
*When God doth for his creature die!*¹⁸

(Italics mine).

As in so many other aspects of his writing on the atonement, Wesley is looking through the legal metaphors to its inner meaning:

And will he not his purchase take
Who died to make us all his own,
One spirit with himself to make,
Flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone?¹⁹

Or again:

Thy soul, for sin an offering made,
Hath cleansed this guilty soul of mine;
Thou hast for me a ransom paid,
To change my human to divine,
To cleanse from all iniquity,
And make the sinner all like thee.²⁰

Note, therefore, the reference to atonement in its widest sense, of uniting us to God, and purging us from sin.

Victory

The reign of sin and death is o'er,
And all may live from sin set free;
Satan hath lost his mortal power;
'Tis swallowed up in victory.²¹

The theme of Christ as victorious over the powers of evil is an important one in the early Church. It is founded on such passages as Colossians 2:13b–15:

He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Although St Paul does not himself enlarge on this subject, it is clear that St John saw the death of Christ as a conflict with Satan in which the latter was vanquished:

Now is the time for judgement on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. (John 12:31).

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. (John 13:2).

As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. (John 13:27).

I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. he has no hold on me. (John 14:30).

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8).

In his book *Christus Victor*²² Gustav Aulén emphasises the importance of this struggle with the powers of darkness in the theology of the Church Fathers. He refers to it as the "classic" idea of the Atonement, as distinct from the "Latin" idea which is largely attributable to Anselm. (Whether he is justified in doing so is open to question: his critics would argue that if any theory could claim to be "classic", it would be the notion of redemption through unity with Christ²³). The characteristics of this "classic" idea are that it is seen in dramatic terms as a cosmic confrontation between God and the powers of darkness, or "tyrants"; that the ensuing victory is from first to last the work of God himself; and that there is no sense in which God is "satisfied" or "placated". In the "Latin" theory, on the other hand, God demands satisfaction for man's sin, and this is paid by Christ essentially as man. Aulén concedes that the "Latin" idea is, up to a point, the more rational of the two:

is in its very structure a rational theory; and from the point of view of this doctrine the classic idea must always seem to be lacking in clearness. It may be doubted, however, whether this demand for rational clearness represents the highest theological wisdom.²⁴

On the other hand, he is insistent that it derives from the medieval penitential system, that it is legalistic, and that it makes an unjustifiable division between the work of God and the work of Christ:

It must be strongly emphasised that it was on the basis of the penitential system that the Latin theory grew up... Two points immediately emerge: First, that the whole idea is essentially legalistic; and, second, that, in speaking of Christ's work, the emphasis is all laid on that which is done by Christ *as man* in relation to God.²⁵

Anselm's basic assumption is that the required satisfaction for transgression must be made by man, and the argument proceeds: Men are not able to make the necessary satisfaction, because they are all sinful. If men cannot do it, then God must do it. But, on the other hand, the satisfaction must be made by man, because man is guilty. The only solution is that God becomes man; this is the answer to the question *Cur Deus Homo?*²⁶

We find in Anselm, as in every form of the Latin theory of the Atonement, the alternative stated: *either* a forgiveness of sins by God, which would mean that sins are not treated seriously and so would amount to a toleration of laxity, *or* satisfaction. No other possibility is regarded as conceivable... *Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum* - "you have not yet fully weighed the gravity of sin".²⁷

Aulén quotes extensively from the Fathers, and especially Irenaeus (c.130–200), whom he summarises as follows:

The Word of God, who is God Himself, has entered in under the conditions of sin and death, to take up the conflict with the powers of evil and carry it through to the decisive victory. This has brought to pass a new relation between God and the world; atonement has been made. The redemptive work is carried out by the Logos *through* the Manhood as His instrument.²⁸

He stresses that Irenaeus did not see the Logos as a Being distinct from God, a “second God”, but used that term in a Johannine sense: “The Word is God Himself”.²⁹ (It is well known that he described the Son and the Holy Spirit as “the two hands of God”).³⁰ We may add to that summary a quotation from Irenaeus himself:

For he strove and conquered. He was as man contending on behalf of the fathers [pro patribus; pro fratribus, “for his brethren” would make better sense] and through obedience cancelling the disobedience. He bound the strong one and set free the weak, and gave salvation to his handiwork by abolishing sin... Had he not as man overcome man's adversary, the enemy would not have been justly overcome.³¹

Likewise Clement of Alexandria (fl 200) refers specifically to a victory over death:

The Lord, on his part, wished to free him from his fetters, and, himself being bound in the flesh – here is divine mystery – grappled with the serpent and enslaved the tyrant, death; and, wonder of wonders, though man was straying through pleasure, though he would be held captive by corruption, the Lord displayed him set at liberty by his outstretched arms.³²

The “serpent” here is earlier defined as pleasure, but must clearly denote the devil as well.

And Aulén quotes Gregory of Nazianzus:

Is it not clear that the Father received the sacrifice, not because he demanded it, but only on account of the divine economy.. that he himself might deliver us, in overcoming the tyrants by his power, and by the mediation of his Son bringing us back to himself.³³

Aulén considers that he has found an ally in Martin Luther. Luther, he says, constantly uses language and metaphor from the classical idea. Christ delivers man from, basically, five enemies: sin, death, the devil, law, and the wrath; and he uses the same language of law as (for instance) Chrysostom used of the devil: “The way of Law is exposed as a false way, a way by which man seeks to ascend to God”; and again: “The nerve of the whole is the idea of Divine Love breaking in pieces the order of merit and justice, and creating a new order to govern the relation of man with God, that of Grace”.³⁴ One can see how far this diverges from the concept of Christ as satisfying the law; Aulén notes Emil Brunner’s description of law as “the granite-foundation of the spiritual world”³⁵, and ascribes to Melanchthon the distortion of Luther’s teaching on this point.³⁶

Likewise, Christ delivers us from the Wrath of God. “In the common mediaeval thinking, the Wrath of God was relegated to the judgment to come; in Luther, it is set forth as operative in the present, as resting even now, in all its awfulness, on sinful and guilt-ridden man”. But, Aulén goes on, “though the Wrath of God is identical with His

will, yet it is, according to Luther, a 'tyrant', even the most awful and terrible of all the tyrants. It is a tyrant in that it stands opposed to the Divine Love".³⁷ He quotes Luther's *Commentary on Galatians*:

The curse, which is *the wrath of God* against the whole world, was in conflict with the blessing - that is to say, with *God's eternal grace and mercy in Christ*. The curse conflicts with the blessing, and would condemn it and altogether annihilate it. but cannot. For the blessing is *divine and eternal*, therefore the curse must yield. For *if the blessing in Christ could yield, then God Himself would have been overcome*. But that is impossible.³⁸

Despite this resurrection of Patristic thought by Luther, the ideas which Aulén describes had little currency after the work of Anselm. It seems to me that there were three main reasons for this. Firstly, there was a growing emphasis on law and justice, as distinct from forgiveness and grace. Secondly, there was the lack of coherence in the "classic" idea as compared with the logic of the Latin idea, which Aulén himself admits. And thirdly, the association of the "classic" idea with the concept of a ransom paid to the devil, or of his deception.³⁹

There is however one very important point to note here. The "classic" idea, as outlined by Aulén, stressed the involvement of God in the atonement: it was something achieved by God acting in Trinity, not a placatory sacrifice offered by the perfect man Jesus to God.⁴⁰ And although Charles Wesley's thought is undeniably substitutionary in many places, and in Aulén's "Latin" mould, many of his hymns are truer to the "classic" idea. On page 64 I said that "the tensions between justice and love are contained and resolved within the divine economy of the Trinity". So let me quote again Gregory of Nazianzus:

Is it not clear that the Father received the sacrifice, not because he demanded it, but only on account of the divine economy...? ⁴¹

That is why Aulén can say that the "classic" idea "reappears from time to time in the hymnody of a Wesley in England or a Grundtvig in Denmark".⁴²

George Carey, in *The Gate of Glory*,⁴³ remarks that it is difficult for present-day Christians to have an objective attitude towards this outlook, as demonic "powers and authorities" represent an outmoded concept; nevertheless, he says, Jesus "clearly saw his ministry as a fight against the powers of darkness", as indeed do the other New Testament writers. The language of cosmic struggle, writes J S Whale in *Victor and Victim*, permeates St Paul's thought, occurring in every epistle except Philemon⁴⁴. And it is probably true to say that Christians today take the idea of Satan, and of demonic powers in general, more seriously than they would have done fifty years ago. "The more I read and think the more I believe in a Devil" wrote Leslie Weatherhead.⁴⁵ Indeed, it can be

said that all the common arguments against the existence of a devil are equally valid against the existence of God. Ironically, perhaps, it has been the work of Sigmund Freud (though written, obviously, in a secular vein) which has made us more receptive to the way in which human beings can be held subconsciously in bondage to hidden forces.

The influence of Satan has been apparent to writers of profound spirituality, like Metropolitan Anthony,⁴⁶ Martin Israel,⁴⁷ Thomas Merton,⁴⁸ and William Johnston.⁴⁹ Christian psychologists (especially those in the Jungian mould) have no difficulty in accepting it: eg M Scott Peck⁵⁰ and Morton Kelsey.⁵¹ The formal use of exorcism and the deliverance ministry appears to have increased in recent years.

The Wesleys clearly did not doubt for a moment the dangers and deceptions posed by the devil. John's famous diary entry for 24 May 1738 includes the words:

It was not long before the enemy suggested: This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?

And he describes the spontaneous and extraordinary disturbance which punctuated his sermon against slavery in Bristol on 6 March 1788:

Satan fought lest his kingdom be delivered up.⁵²

Charles likewise saw the Christian life as a struggle against the wiles of Satan. The following extracts from a very lengthy entry in his Journal of 19 April 1741, which contains affinities to both Genesis 3:1-5 and John's 1738 experience, are an apt illustration:

I was hastily called to one that was dying. It was Hannah Richardson, a young woman... [Several months after hearing Charles's preaching] she rejoiced in her Saviour, and testified, "In Him I have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of my sins".

But alas! The Comforter was as a guest that tarrieth but a day. She soon gave place to the reasoning devil, who asked, "How can these things be? How can you be justified, so vile a sinner as you? You only deceive yourself! Hath God for Christ's sake forgiven you? He hath surely not forgiven you". By such suggestions he well-nigh tore away her shield.⁵³

She continued in this frame of mind for some months until she neared the point of death:

In this dreadful moment, this last extremity, this deepest distress the human soul is capable of, the Comforter came. The Lord, her Saviour, came suddenly to his temple... He took away the veil from her heart, and revealed himself in her in a manner the world knoweth not of. She broke out, "Now I know that Christ died for me. He hath washed me from all my sins in his precious blood. I have eternal life abiding in me".

Other words he records include:

"I believe Christ died for all".

"I will wrestle with thee for a blessing. I will not let thee go unless thou bless him."⁵⁴ Bless that soul... Now I am more than conqueror."

"I have power with God and man, and have prevailed".⁵⁵

"I am made perfect in love."

"It is finished" (her last words).

It is noteworthy that Charles saw some of the disturbances which arose during his preaching as being diabolical in origin. Thus, on 12 June 1740:

The power of the Lord was present in his word, both to wound and heal. The adversary roared in the midst of the congregation; for to him, and not to the God of order, do I impute those horrible outcries which almost drowned my voice, and kept back the glad tidings from sinners.⁵⁶

Similarly, on 11 December 1738 he records: "Mr Hollis fell into violent agitations, and gobbled like a turkey-cock. I was frightened, and began exorcising him".⁵⁷

Many of the early Methodists, like Hannah Richardson, felt themselves engaged in conflict with the powers of darkness. To a certain JV, the devil "hissed" the words of The Wisdom of Solomon, 2:19:

Insult and torture are the means to put [the just man] to the test, to measure his forbearance and learn how long his patience lasts.⁵⁸

Another found comfort in Wesley's own words:

I felt at once as if the powers of darkness surrounded me. The former blessings I had enjoyed, and my abuse of them, were brought to my view, and it was suggested that I could not be restored. But greater was he that was for me than all the powers of hell; the promises were offered one after another, and verses of hymns, exactly suited to the breathing of my soul; some of them were,

'Tis worse than death my God to love,
And not my God alone.⁵⁹

...yet unbelief prevailed, and made me shrink back, though

My soul breaks out in strong desire
The perfect bliss to prove;
My longing heart is all on fire
To be dissolved in love.⁶⁰

I felt it as full of divine love as it could contain, but it was contracted; then these words were applied, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me". This encouraged me much: I cried to God to break the bar of unbelief, and come in and adorn my soul with the brightness of his presence. Then these words were spoken to my soul, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Yet I felt unbelief prevail, and cried,

Thou canst o'ercome this heart of mine,
Thou wilt victorious prove,
For everlasting strength is thine
And everlasting love.

Thy powerful Spirit shall subdue
Unconquerable sin,
Cleanse this foul heart, and make it new,
And write thy law within.⁶¹

Short of this blessing I determined not to rest; many things were brought before me to discourage me; but whatever was suggested, my answer was, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth me from *all* sin." Thus I fought, cried, agonised, till this verse occurred to me,

The promised land, from Pisgah's top,
I now exult to see;

My hope is full (O glorious hope!)
Of immortality.

My fluttering spirit fatigues my breast,
And swells and spreads abroad,
And pants for everlasting rest,
And struggles into God.⁶²

At this instant the captain of my salvation conquered.

My soul a sudden power did feel,
And heard a whisper, "Peace be still!"

In a moment, as quick as the twinkling of an eye, I was set at perfect liberty, and could rejoice with joy unspeakable, full assurance of faith, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost: these words were whispered to my soul, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse."

...Since that time my peace has flowed as a river; I continually walk in the light of God's countenance; the intercourse is ever open between my soul and God.⁶³

Charles may not use the theme of victory as frequently as substitutionary language, but it is not difficult to find. It is clearly present in "My heart is full of Christ, and longs / Its glorious matter to declare" (*Hymns & Psalms* 799(4));⁶⁴ this hymn is based on Psalm 45):

Come, and maintain thy righteous cause,
And let thy glorious toil succeed;
Dispread the victory of thy cross,
Ride on, and prosper in thy deed;
Through earth triumphantly ride on,
And reign in every heart alone.

- and even more so in "Jesus the conqueror reigns" (*Hymns & Psalms* 262),⁶⁵ where the victory is clearly one by Jesus as our representative:

1. Jesus the conqueror reigns,
In glorious strength arrayed,
His kingdom over all maintains,
And bids the earth be glad.
Ye peoples all, rejoice
In Jesus' mighty love;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice,
To him who rules above.
2. Extol his kingly power,
Kiss the exalted Son,
Who died; and lives to die no more
High on his Father's throne:
Our advocate with God,
He undertakes our cause,
And spreads through all the earth abroad
The victory of his cross.
3. "Courage!" your Captain cries,
Who all your toil foreknew;
"Toil ye shall have; yet all despise,
I have o'ercome for you."
This is the victory!
Before our faith they fall;
Jesus has died for you and me;
Believe, and conquer all!

Another striking hymn on the victory won by the cross is found in "Our Lord is risen from the dead!",⁶⁶ a paraphrase of Psalm 24 where Wesley typically interprets the Old Testament christologically. Verse 4 runs:

Who is this King of Glory, who?
The Lord, that all his foes o'ercame,
The world, sin, death and hell o'erthrew;
And Jesus is the conqueror's name: Alleluia!

A very similar hymn where the Old Testament is again interpreted christologically runs:

1. Jesus, Jehovah, God,
Thou art gone up on high,
Amidst the angelic multitude,
Thy chariots through the sky;
In majesty supreme,
Absolute God confessed,
Captive thyself hast taken them
Who all mankind oppressed.
2. Thou hast in triumph led
Our enemies and thine,
And, more than conqueror, displayed
The omnipotence divine:
We see them all before
Thy bleeding cross subdued,
And prostrate at thy feet adore
The one eternal God.⁶⁷

This hymn is based on Psalm 68 verse 18, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men...". There are also allusions to Romans 8:37: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us", and Colossians 2:15, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it".

Then, in a hymn ("Tis finished! The Messias dies")⁶⁸ which is full of Atonement themes, he writes:

5. The reign of sin and death is o'er,
And all may live from sin set free;
Satan hath lost his mortal power;
'Tis swallowed up in victory...
Death, hell, and sin are now subdued;
All grace is now to sinners given;
And, lo, I plead the atoning blood,
And in thy right I claim thy heaven!

But the theme appears best of all in his previously unpublished poems.⁶⁹ In a poem based on Luke 19:11 he had written:

Nature cannot comprehend
Jesus reigning on a cross.

Now, commenting on John 19:17, he stresses the irony that the Galilean nailed to the cross is truly King of the Jews:

1. Victim of an angry God,
Devoted to the skies,
Isaac-like he bears the wood
Of his own sacrifice;
Bears with strength invincible
The arms which still the world o'erthrow,
Daily conquer sin and hell
And our last deadly foe.
2. King of saints, he meekly bears
The sceptre of his cross,
Thus his royal power declares,
And executes his laws;
Thus his government maintains,
The virtue of his death exerts,
By his bleeding passion reigns
In all his people's hearts.⁷⁰

The themes of ransom and victory were, therefore, important both in Christian tradition and Charles Wesley's thought. He did not attach to ransom the literalistic meaning which appealed to Gregory of Nyssa or, in his own day, Toplady. Nevertheless, there was no doubt in his mind about the reality of the powers of darkness, and of the Christian's struggle against them. The atonement was both the sign that Jesus had conquered Satan on Calvary and the assurance that, since Jesus is our representative, the believer may claim the victory in his or her present struggles.

Notes on Chapter 3

- 1 PW Volume 4, p 340 (*H&SP* 1742), "O Jesus, let me bless thy name".
- 2 St Mark 10:45 (St Matthew 20:28 is almost identical).
- 3 Anonymous hymn, c 1869, in *Hymns & Psalms*, 421(2).
- 4 Gregory of Nyssa, *or. cat.* 21-24, quoted by Henry Bettenson, *The Later Christian Fathers*, OUP 1972, p 142.
- 5 *Epistle to Diognetus*, ix.; Bettenson, *Early Church Fathers*, OUP 1969, p 56.
- 6 Origen, *Comm. in Matthaeum*, xvi 8; Bettenson, *Early Church Fathers*, OUP 1969, p 224.
- 7 J E Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, Epworth Press, London, 1941, p 195. Unfortunately Rattenbury does not give evidence for his statement.
- 8 *Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the first time transcribed from the original* by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge; WHS Occasional Publication 1987, p 40.
- 9 See *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, by Randy L Maddox, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1994, p 98. The BCP refers to the death of Christ as "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world".
- 10 *Hymns & Psalms* 629 (*HoLS* 1745).
- 11 Toplady, *Petitionary Hymns* XXXVIII (6). Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778) was converted by a Methodist preacher, but later adopted extreme Calvinist views and became one of John Wesley's most abusive and intemperate critics.
- 12 "All hail, Redeemer of Mankind", *PW* Volume 3, p 308 (*HoLS* 1745).
- 13 *PW* Volume 1, p 326 (*H&SP* 1740).
- 14 *PW* Volume 13, p 220 (*SH* 1762).
- 15 *PW* Volume 13 no. 3156 (*SH* 1762).
- 16 *Hymns & Psalms* 520 (*HoGEL* 1741). (See Appendix C for the possibility that John, rather than Charles, may have written this hymn).
- 17 *PW* Volume 13, p 220 (*SH* 1762).
- 18 *PW* Volume 3, p 247 (*HoLS* 1745).
- 19 "See where the quickening cause of all", *PW* Volume 3, p 299 (*HoLS* 1745).
- 20 *PW* Volume 5, p 148 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 21 *PW* Volume 12, p 99 (*SH* 1762).
- 22 Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A G Herbert, SPCK, London, 1931.
- 23 See Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p 348.
- 24 *Ib*, p 75.
- 25 *Ib*, p 98.
- 26 *Ib*, p 102.
- 27 *Ib*, pp 105-106.
- 28 *Ib*, p 49.
- 29 *Ib*, p 37.
- 30 Henry Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, OUP 1969, p 88.
- 31 *Ib*, p 78.
- 32 *Ib*, p 176.
- 33 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 45.
- 34 Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A G Herbert, SPCK, London, 1931, pp 128-129.
- 35 *Ib*, p 107.
- 36 Dr Gordon Rupp agrees with Aulén's enlistment of Luther on this point. He refers to "the mighty work of Christ by which, in the conflict of the cross, he overcame the devil, sin and death"; this is something into which the Christian man enters into in conformity with Christ. (*The Righteousness of God*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1953, p 207).
- 37 Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A G Herbert, SPCK 1931, pp 130.
- 38 *Ib*, p 130-131.
- 39 This has already been discussed above. Aulén himself believes that the contract between God and the devil, which often appears in the idea, was considered to show that God, far from cheating the devil, was concerned to demonstrate that his "dealings even with the powers of evil have the character of 'fair play'".

40 Professor Colin Gunton comments here that Aulén was right in speaking of a victory, and a
divine one, but “it is not merely a divine victory. The victory is at once both human and divine -
a divine victory only because it is a human one...” (*The Actuality of Atonement*, T & T Clark,
Edinburgh, 1988, p 59).

41 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat.* 45.

42 Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A G Herbert, SPCK, London, 1931, p 161.

43 George Carey, *The Gate of Glory*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1986, p 169.

44 J S Whale, *Victor and Victim*, Cambridge University Press 1960, p 29.

45 Leslie Weatherhead, *The Will of God*, Epworth Press, London, 1955, p 32.

46 Metropolitan Anthony, *The Essence of Prayer*, DLT, London, 1986 p 46.

47 Martin Israel, *The Dark Face of Reality*, Collins Fount, London, 1989, e.g. Chapter 6.

48 Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*, pp 70–1 and 91.

49 William Johnston, *Silent Music*, Collins Fount, London, 1977, p 99.

50 M Scott Peck, *People of the Lie*, Rider, London, 1988, p 184.

51 Morton T Kelsey, *Christo–Psychology*, DLT, London, 1983, p 34.

52 *John Wesley’s Journal*, entry for 3 March 1788 (Standard Edition, 7:360).

53 *Charles Wesley’s Journal* (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 168, though the entry is abbreviated).

54 Wesley’s famous hymn, “Come, O thou Traveller unknown”, based on the “Wrestling Jacob”
story in Genesis 32:24-32, was not published until the following year. It is therefore possible
that the hymn was inspired by this episode. On the other hand, a sermon may have given rise to
both.

55 Another biblical allusion found in “Come, O thou Traveller unknown”.

56 See the *Journal* entry for that date (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 240).

57 See the *Journal* entry for that date (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 138).

58 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 7 (1784), p 73.

59 These lines are frequently quoted in accounts in *The Arminian Magazine*.

60 “Jesus has died that I might live”, *Hymns & Psalms* 733(3) (*H&SP* 1742).

61 “Jesus, Redeemer, Saviour, Lord”, *PW* Volume 1, p 270 (*H&SP* 1740).

62 “O joyful sound of gospel grace!”, *PW* Volume 2, p 364 (*H&SP* 1742).

63 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 15 (1792), pp 585-586. The closing words are probably an
allusion to *PW* Volume 1, p 225 (*H&SP* 1740): “Open the intercourse between/ My longing
soul and thee”.

64 *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (1743).

65 *H&SP* 1749.

66 *Hymns & Psalms* 206 (*A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, 1743).

67 *PW* Volume 7, p 239 (*HT* 1767).

68 *PW* Volume 12, p 99 (*HT* 1762). See Appendix A for the full text of this hymn.

69 *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood Books,
Nashville, Tennessee, 1992.

70 *Ib*, hymn based on John 19:17, p 275.

4. THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Victim divine, thy grace we claim
While thus thy precious death we show;
Once offered up, a spotless Lamb,
In thy great temple here below,
Thou didst for all mankind atone,
And standest now before the throne.¹

As Vincent Taylor notes,² the representative and sacrificial aspects of the atonement are closely related, and one aspect of the atonement is affected by another in an intimate manner. It is not easy to disentangle the sacrificial aspect of Christ's death from its substitutionary or representative aspects. To put it another way, we can say that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for us, but we need to go on to ask how that sacrifice became effective, and whether it adds anything to what Christ achieved as substitute or representative.

It is clear that the New Testament writers thought in sacrificial terms, and this is particularly true of the writer to the Hebrews, who seems to have had a very marked influence on Charles Wesley.³ On the other hand, it is more difficult to determine what these writers saw as the significance of sacrifice. S W Sykes writes:

At the time of Jesus it appears that the rationale for sacrificial rituals had ceased to play much part in religious profession, and that sacrifices were performed for no greater reason than that they had been commanded. The evidence is far from easy to interpret. But it may not be far from the truth to say that for the first-century Jew of Palestine the concept of worship and the occurrence of sacrifice were simply interlocked, as internal and external expressions of the one reality.⁴

Vincent Taylor poses the question whether the sacrificial approach is still desirable as an aid in presenting the doctrine of the Atonement,⁵ and, after reviewing both the New Testament writers and later theologians, concludes that, while the thought of sacrifice is freely used, it is not worked out as the foundation of a comprehensive theory, and that all too frequently it is presented as propitiatory or placatory.⁶ To this we can add that for the first thousand years or so of the Church, there was little attempt to go beyond the simple statement that Christ died for our sins (apart from the ransom theory); indeed, Origen describes sacrifice as a mystery.⁷ Metaphor, therefore, is entirely appropriate in this context.

Professor Colin Gunton, who is concerned to stress the value of metaphors in this context as long as we do not press them into literal truth, points out that "sacrifice" is already used metaphorically in the Old Testament (Psalm 51:17).⁸ In Hebrews, the sacrifice is also the priest, and for Paul it is something given *by* God (Romans 3:25 and 8:32) rather than *to* God. (It seems to me that the gist of Hebrews is not that the death of Jesus was a sacrifice on Old Testament lines, but that this was a sacrifice to end all sacrifices).⁹

A non-literal view of sacrifice was also taken by St Augustine. He writes:

The offering of sacrifices of animal victims by the Fathers in ancient times... is to be understood as having just this purpose: to symbolise all our endeavours to be united to God, and our concern to achieve the same end for our neighbour. A sacrifice therefore is the visible sacrament of an invisible sacrifice; that is, it is a sacred sign... What is commonly called a sacrifice is the *sign* of a sacrifice... A true sacrifice is every act which is performed so that we may be united with God in holy fellowship... Although this sacrifice is made or offered by man, still the sacrifice is a divine act.¹⁰

Once we cease trying to take literally what should be treated as metaphor, the concept of sacrifice is one which has meaning in our own lives. Thus Paul writes in Romans 12:1:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.

The conclusion of S W Sykes is that:

All traditions, from Paul to the Johannine corpus, can interpret Christ's atoning death for us, not all that often but unmistakably and in constantly changing ways, as a sacrifice, or rather self-sacrifice, and our salvation as redemption through his blood.¹¹

We shall find that Charles Wesley, influenced particularly by the Letter to the Hebrews, also thought in sacrificial as well as substitutionary and representative terms. In the present chapter I shall consider his thought under the headings Priesthood, Sacrifice, Blood, and Intercession.

4.1 Priesthood

The New Testament writers would have seen a profound parallel between the Jewish high priest and Jesus. As Joachim Jeremias reminds us:

It is especially significant, however, for the cultic character which the high priest possessed *ex officio*, that his death had power to atone. As soon as the high priest died, all homicides who had fled from their avengers to the "cities of refuge" (Num. 35:9ff; Deut. 19:1ff; cf Ex. 21:25) were free and might return home..., and according to the prevailing opinion of the scribes they might even take up their former positions... The death of the high priest had, by virtue of his office, expiated the guilt incurred by accidental homicide.¹²

This priesthood of Christ is not to be thought of as taking place at the time of his passion alone. As D M Baillie puts it:

Deissman pointed out that when St Paul speaks of "Christ crucified", the participle he uses is not in the aorist but in the perfect tense...which means not, "Christ who was once crucified" but "Christ who is crucified". The work on Calvary...was the beginning of a priesthood which goes on for ever in the unseen realm, in heaven.¹³

The same thought is enshrined in our liturgies for Holy Communion. The ASB Rite A refers to Jesus as "our great high priest"¹⁴, and the Lima document of the World Council of Churches says that Jesus "ever lives to make intercession for us".¹⁵ In scripture, it is particularly marked in the Letter to the Hebrews, and Bishop Gore wrote in 1901:

In the Epistle to the Hebrews all that goes before the Ascension is the preparation of Christ for His priestly work. His work as the great high priest, and his entry into at least the effectiveness of His office, begins with his entry into the true holy of holies, in the power of His own blood once for all surrendered in death... It is at the entrance into heaven, and not upon the cross, that He accomplished His atonement for us, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and His work as high priest, which begins with His entrance into heaven, is perpetual. His propitiation and His intercession are identical: and both consist in His "appearing" or presenting Himself for us.¹⁶

This view of Christ's priestly work appealed strongly to Wesley, though he certainly does not go so far as to see the atonement as accomplished solely before the throne of grace instead of on the cross. He has a great high-priestly hymn in "Entered the holy place above":¹⁷

Entered the holy place above,
Covered with meritorious scars,
The tokens of his dying love
Our great High-priest in glory bears;
He pleads his passion on the tree,
And shows himself to God for me.

This high priest is (as the writer to the Hebrews puts it) not one "which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15 KJV). So Wesley writes:

1. We have not an High-priest above
Unmoved at what we suffer here:
In tenderest sympathy of love
He shares our pain, and grief, and fear,
Wounded with every wounded soul,
He bleeds the balm that makes us whole.
2. ...Adopts, and makes our woes his own,
With tear for tear, and groan for groan.¹⁸

This characteristic of Christ is one which we find appealing today, though we are more likely to approach it from the concept of solidarity (see Chapter 2.3); I have, however, dealt with it here because Charles Wesley instinctively finds it in the scriptural category of Christ as High Priest. "We do not have to explain our agonies to Christ – He shares

them", wrote W R Matthews. Margaret Spufford relates that when she suffered agonising pain from collapsed vertebrae,

I had suddenly been aware even as I screamed, of the presence of the Crucified. He did not cancel the moment, or assuage it, but was inside it.¹⁹

Likewise, Thomas Merton writes:

Suffering is wasted if we suffer entirely alone. Those who do not know Christ, suffer alone. Their suffering is no communion. The awful solitude of suffering is not meant to seek communion in vain. But all communion is denied to it except that which unites our spirit with God in the Passion of Jesus Christ.²⁰

And here is John Steinbeck:

Christ nailed up might be more than a symbol of all pain. He might in very truth contain all pain. And a man standing on a hilltop with arms outstretched, a symbol of a symbol, he too might be a reservoir of all the pain that ever was.²¹

The Wesleys' followers experienced the same comfort. *A Short Account of the Life and Death of William Adams* recounts:

His mother asked him if he was not very ill. He replied, "I do not feel much pain or sickness; for it seems as if the Lord bore all my afflictions for me."²²

4.2 Sacrifice

Both Wesleys were particularly influenced here by Dr Daniel Brevint,²³ since the Preface to *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745) is an abridgement of his *Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*. Some extracts will be enough to show how Brevint saw the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as an act with which the Christian needs to identify:

Too many who are called Christians live as if under the gospel there were no sacrifice but that of Christ on the cross...Though the sacrifice of ourselves cannot *procure* salvation, yet it is altogether needful to our receiving it..

The whole divinity of *St Paul* turns upon this *conformity* both of actions and of sufferings; and that of *St John* likewise upon this same *communion* or fellowship. The truth is, our Lord had neither birth, nor death, nor resurrection on earth, but such as we are to *conform* to: as He hath neither ascension, nor everlasting life, nor glory in heaven, but such as we may have in *common* with Him.

This *conformity* to Christ, which is the grand principle of the whole Christian religion, relates to our duty about His *sufferings*; and then to our happiness about His *exaltation*, presupposing His *sufferings*. And both make up a full comment on our Lord's frequent command to His disciples, to *follow Him*. For without doubt we shall follow Him into heaven, if we will follow Him on earth; and shall have *communion* with Him in glory, if we have *conformity* with Him here in His *sufferings*.

These expressions to *follow*, to have *conformity*, and to have *communion*, oblige us all to follow Him, as much as in us lies, through all the parts of His life, and every function of His office. We must be born with Him, die on His cross, be buried in His grave, suffer in His tribulations. *Christ* and Christians must be constantly together: *Where I am*, saith He, *there shall My servant be*. But of all these duties the most necessary is, the bearing His *cross*, and dying with Him in *sacrifice*.

Christ never designed to offer Himself for His people, without His people...

Christians are not crucified in the same manner as Christ was; yet because they cast themselves upon His cross and sufferings, as the only means of atonement for their sins and salvation for

their souls, because of the grief they suffer to think of the Son of God thus dying, dying only for their sake...; and because, their whole body of sin being thus crucified there remains no life in them, but what is offered up to God's service; - on all these grounds, the saviour thus offering Himself, and the saved so united to Him by faith, so partaking of His sufferings, and so given up to His will, are accounted before God one and the same sacrifice.

Here again the concept of Christ as Representative emerges; and nowhere can Christians identify themselves with Christ more regularly and more appropriately than in the Holy Communion. No doubt the Wesleys were strongly influenced here by the Book of Common Prayer, which uses the following post-Communion prayer:

O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant, that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee, that all we, who are partakers of this holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service...

In a hymn typically full of scriptural allusions, Wesley speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus:

1. O thou, whose offering on the tree
The legal offerings all foreshowed,
Borrowed their whole effect from thee,
And drew their virtue from thy blood:
2. The blood of goats and bullocks slain
Could never for one sin atone:
To purge the guilty offerer's stain,
Thine was the work, and thine alone.
3. Vain in themselves their duties were,
Their services could never please,
Till joined with thine, and made to share
The merits of thy righteousness.
4. Forward they cast a faithful look
On thy approaching sacrifice;
And thence their pleasing savour took,
And rose accepted to the skies.
5. Those feeble types, and shadows old,
Are all in thee, the Truth, fulfilled:
We in thy sacrifice behold
The substance of those rites revealed.
6. Thy meritorious sufferings past,
We see to us by faith brought back;
And on thy grand oblation cast,
Its saving benefits partake.²⁴

There are obvious references here to Hebrews (e.g. Chapter 9:13; 10:4). Then, in a verse which has been omitted from an otherwise familiar hymn, "Victim Divine, thy grace we claim",²⁵ Wesley writes:

He still respects thy sacrifice;
Its savour sweet doth always please;
The offering smokes through earth and skies
Diffusing life, and joy, and peace;
To these, thy lower courts, it comes,
And fills them with divine perfumes.

It follows from Wesley's concept of Christ as Representative that the sacrifice is also made by ourselves as a response to the love of God. In "O thou who camest from above"²⁶ he writes:

4. Ready for all thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.

Likewise in "Being of beings, God of love":²⁷

Thine, wholly thine, we long to be:
Our sacrifice receive;
Made, and preserved, and saved by thee,
To thee ourselves we give.

A hymn now unfamiliar, "Happy the souls that followed thee",²⁸ puts it even more strikingly:

6. We cast our sins into that fire
Which did thy sacrifice consume,
And every base and vain desire
To daily crucifixion doom.
7. Thou art with all thy members here,
In this tremendous mystery
We jointly before God appear,
To offer up ourselves with thee.

This ties in closely with what Professor J D G Dunn describes as "Paul's understanding of Jesus' death as a representative and sacrificial death of sinful humankind... It is precisely by identification with Christ in his death as a *sacrifice* that the process of the dying away of the believer in his dependence on this age can be accomplished".²⁹

4.3 Intercession

"Therefore", says the writer to the Hebrews of Jesus, "he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb 7:25, NIV). This is another area where many Christians may have difficulty. Does not our heavenly Father know our needs before we ask him? Does he have to be persuaded to grant our requests, as in some theologies he must be propitiated before he can pardon? Is it necessary for Jesus to transmit our petitions to God, and might not this lead to praying

to the Virgin or the saints so that our petitions enter at a humbler level still and move up the divine hierarchy, rather as a letter might be seen first by the EO, HEO and SEO before it reaches the Principal? This would be understandable if, as is sometimes suggested, we have no access to the Father.³⁰ But it is not clear how we can cry "Abba! Father!", or pray "Our Father, who art in heaven" if we have no access to him. The statement in Ephesians 2:18 that "Through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit" is unlikely to mean that Christ is simply a conduit to the Father for our prayers, since the word for "access", *prosagoge*, is used of introducing a person into the presence of a king.³¹

For such reasons the concept of the atonement as intercession, which appealed to Charles Wesley as it did to the writer to the Hebrews, has been largely neglected. Michael Winter, in his recent book *The Atonement*, sees the death of Jesus as his intercession for the whole human race, a pleading with which we are to identify ourselves; but he admits that:

This field has been almost totally neglected by modern writers. I know of only one author who touches on the matter: R S Wallace, *The Atoning Death of Christ*, Westchester, Illinois, 1981, devotes two paragraphs to it in passing (p 124), citing Hooker's *Laws*, V, 51.³²

Since then, the Revd Arnold Cooper's study of our Lord's intercession has been published³³ and shows how heavily Wesley relies on the Letter to the Hebrews: of seventeen references in the New Testament, fourteen are in that letter, and the other three in Romans 8, 1 Peter 2, and 1 John 2.³⁴

Those who relate more easily to Jesus than to the Father may find the concept of his intercession more helpful than those who instinctively pray to the Father. Nevertheless it is very interesting that Tom Smail, who cannot be accused of minimising the Father's place in our worship,³⁵ writes thus of Jesus in his book *The Giving Gift*:

His self-giving reaches its climax on the cross, which can itself be most helpfully understood as intercession – the self-offering of the eternal Son to the eternal Father on behalf of mankind from the midst of the extremities of human sin and suffering.³⁶

I find this understanding of atonement as priestly intercession extremely helpful.³⁷ Smail relates this understanding back to P T Forsyth, among others, and thus to the concepts of representation and solidarity (Chapter 2.3 above). He continues:

It is not that he pleads with a Father who is reluctant to give. Intercession in a Christian context is never a matter of persuading God to give what he would otherwise withhold. Rather, all authentically divine power is released through self-giving – the self-giving of the Father to the Son in the Spirit and the responsive self-giving of the Son to the Father in the same Spirit. What the cross demonstrates for ever is that with God power is self-giving, and self-giving is power. That is why intercession, first Christ's and then ours in him, is effective. As Christ

offered himself to be an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, in a way that neither can nor needs to be repeated, so we offer ourselves in and through him, so that the benefits of his saving work may be applied to others.

Now in heaven Jesus, the great high priest, gives himself to the Father in intercession on our behalf. He does it as one of us who has plumbed the depths of our need and our misery and on the cross has offered an atoning obedience. He does it as the one who knows that the Father has responded to his atoning self-giving by raising him from the dead, and that he will, therefore, respond to his priestly intercession by giving him what he asks for us. His is the prayer of the great Mediator, who is both God and man. He knows from the inside both the gracious divine purpose and the disgraced human situation and by his intercession can expose the one to the other.³⁸

Smail's reference here to "atoning obedience" is interesting in that R S Paul, in *The Atonement and the Sacraments*, finds the real heart of R C Moberly's doctrine of the atonement in our Lord's obedience, and quotes him as saying, "The atonement itself can be exhibited as one great consummation of obedience".³⁹ What Smail says is also important in that it stresses the humanity, as well as the divinity, of Christ. It is not a case of the Second Person of the Trinity pleading with the First to spare us, but of Jesus as contributing something from his humanity. In the same way, we believe that our own prayers have a value other than to remind or persuade God of human distress, and are a resource which he can use and be said to need.

Richard Hooker, who may well have had a considerable influence on the Wesleys⁴⁰ sets out the intercession of Christ thus:

And as Christ took manhood that by it he might be capable of death whereunto he humbled himself, so because manhood is the proper subject of compassion and feeling pity, which maketh the sceptre of Christ's regency even in the kingdom of heaven amiable, he which without our nature could not on earth suffer for the sins of the world, doth now also by means thereof both make intercession to God for sinners and exercise domain over all men with a true, a natural, and a sensible touch of mercy.⁴¹

There can in any case be no doubt that the idea of Christ as intercessor has been valuable to many. John Wesley relates the experience of William Grimshaw, who fell into distress of mind and spirit about his sinfulness:

In this trouble he continued more than three years, not acquainting anyone with the distress he suffered; till one day, (in 1742,) being in the utmost agony of mind, there was clearly represented to him Jesus Christ pleading for him with God the Father, and gaining a free pardon for him. In that moment all his fears vanished away, and he was filled with joy unspeakable.⁴²

And an early Methodist wrote:

In June [1782] I had a powerful manifestation of his love, which kept me the whole night engaged in prayer. By the eye of faith, I saw my Redeemer pleading for me. I had a clear evidence that my pardon was sealed, and I was able to agonize in prayer for the destruction of inbred sin.

The certainty I had that he ever lived to pray for me, and the assurance that he could not pray in vain, fully convinced me that I should be restored, but I did not believe it would be then...⁴³

The intercession of Jesus with the Father features widely in the hymns of Charles Wesley, and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that he sees it as a means of persuading God to grant what he would otherwise be unwilling to. We may be familiar with these words from "Arise, my soul, arise":⁴⁴

2. He ever lives above,
For me to intercede,
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood, to plead;
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.
3. Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me:
"Forgive him, O forgive!" they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"
4. The Father hears him pray,
His dear anointed one;
He cannot turn away
The presence of his Son;
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

But many of the hymns which are no longer sung present this intercession in equally graphic terms. We have already encountered "Entered the holy place above", in which verse 2 runs:

2. Before the throne my Saviour stands,
My friend and Advocate appears;
My name is written on his hands,
And him the Father always hears;
While low at Jesu's Cross I bow,
He hears the blood of sprinkling now.⁴⁵

See where before the throne he stands,
And pours the all-prevailing prayer,
Points to his side, and lifts his hands,
And shows that I am graven there.
He ever lives for me to pray;
He prays that I with him may reign:
Amen to what my Lord doth say!
Jesus, thou cannot pray in vain.⁴⁶

Still thou stand'st before the throne,
Ever offering up my prayers,
These presenting with thine own.⁴⁷

Jesus is my great High-priest,
 Who doth in heaven appear;
 Him presenting my request,
 The Father loves to hear:
 Jesus, (if his wrath arise,
 And Justice on the sinner frown,)
 Jesus speaks and pacifies,
 And prays his anger down.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, even if the doctrine in these hymns seems somewhat crude, the idea of representation emerges in the final words of the following hymn:

1. He dies, as now for us he dies!
 That all-sufficient sacrifice
 Subsists, eternal as the Lamb,
 In every time and place the same,
 To all alike it co-extends,
 Its saving power never ends.
2. He lives for us to intercede,
 For us he doth this moment plead,
 And all who could not see him die
 May now with faith's interior eye
 Behold him stand as slaughtered there,
 And feel the answer to his prayer.
3. While now for us the Saviour prays,
 Father, we humbly sue for grace,
 Poor helpless dying victims we,
 Loaded with sin and misery
 His infinite atonement plead,
 Ourselves presenting with our head.⁴⁹

It should be added that Wesley sees a continuity between the words of Jesus on the cross and these high-priestly prayers:

Would Jesus have the sinner die?
 Why hangs he then on yonder tree?
 What means that strange expiring cry?
 Sinners, he prays for you and me:
 Forgive them, Father, O forgive!
 They know not that by me they live.⁵⁰

- and from "All ye that pass by":

2. He dies to atone
 For sins not his own;
 Your debt he hath paid, and your work he hath done.
 Ye all may receive
 The peace he did leave
 Who made intercession: My Father, forgive!
3. For you and for me
 He prayed on the tree:
 The prayer is accepted, the sinner is free.
 That sinner is I,
 Who on Jesus rely,
 And come for the pardon God cannot deny.⁵¹

4.4 Blood

There are few terms in Charles Wesley's hymns which for him and his hearers were more natural, and for us today are more unnatural, than the blood of Christ, though frequent singing tends to obscure, rather than to emphasise, this point:

His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.⁵²

And can it be, that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?⁵³

O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels thy blood
So freely spilt for me.⁵⁴

It is doubtful whether the average worshipper thinks at all about the significance of blood here, but as soon as the less familiar appears, such as:

Plunge me in the purple tide
Of thy atoning blood...⁵⁵

or:

That blood we felt through faith applied,
And knew our sins forgiven.
And tell mankind the purple tide
Would waft them all to heaven.⁵⁶

a feeling of revulsion may occur. It is no more natural for us to think in terms of Jesus' blood than to use "bowels" to express tender mercies ("To me, to all, thy bowels move; / Thy nature and thy name is Love"; these words in "Come O thou Traveller unknown" have long been amended to "... thy *mercies* move" (*Hymns & Psalms* 434, verse 7)). And on similar lines, references in the Bible to the *blood* of Christ have been amended in the Good News Version to *death*. John Wesley himself protested against the glib use of this term, and criticised Calvinist preachers who, lacking sense or grace, bawled out clichés about "the blood", and left their foolish hearers saying, "What a fine gospel sermon!" Rather, he said, they should "preach Christ in all his offices".⁵⁷

Interestingly, however, we seem happy enough with the words of the Communion Service: "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, keep you in eternal life".⁵⁸ And Dr Leslie Weatherhead, after some reservations, was prepared to advocate its use as the best term available to describe the sacrificial self-giving of Christ:

How natural, then, that "blood" should be the word which, more than any other, has come to symbolise a self-giving not only once on the Cross, but a self-giving which can only cease when the last soul who can still make response, makes it and is thereby saved; saved, that is, from the separation from God of which I have written and from consequent despair; saved, to use

the New Testament term, from hell; "saved by His precious blood," or, if you prefer it, by the love, of which the voluntarily shed blood is both the symbol and the pledge.⁵⁹

A warning against trying to emasculate the language of Wesley and others is given by Bernard Lord Manning:

You cannot tinker with the stupendous things; you must take them or leave them. If the Catholic and Evangelical doctrine of atonement by the blood of Christ be true, no expression of it can be too strong; all on the contrary must be too weak.⁶⁰

In scripture, of course, the word is deeply significant. R McL Wilson, in *The New Century Bible Commentary - Hebrews*, notes that in the Old Testament "the blood was invested with a mysterious potency, which made it an appropriate medium for sacrifices of expiation, for rites of purification or for acts of consecration" and has "a mysterious, expiatory power".⁶¹ The article by F J Taylor in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* summarises the matter thus:

These categories of thought - blood as the token of life violently ended: the greatest offering being the giving of life or blood (John 15:13), the greatest crime to take blood or life, the greatest penalty to have one's life or blood taken and the blood or life being the only adequate atonement for blood or life which man cannot give as his own life is already forfeit (Ps 49:7-8) and he is nothing which is not God's (Ps 50:9-10) to give - supplied by the language and cultus of the OT, are used in the NT to set forth the significance of the death of Christ. In him all these meanings are summed up and fulfilled. The phrase "the blood of Christ" is used much more frequently in the NT than either the death of Christ or the Cross of Christ (cf V Taylor, *The Atonement in NT Teaching*, 2nd ed, p 177), especially in Pauline Epp, Heb and 1 John. It is a pictorial way of referring to the violent death upon a cross of shame voluntarily endured for men by Christ (Rom 3:25, 5:9). The shedding of his blood upon the Cross (John 19:34) brought to an end his earthly life so that "the blood of Christ" indicates the significance which that death bore and still bears for men (Rom 5:9). It has a decisive once-for-all quality about it so that those who are said to be sprinkled by his blood (Heb 10:19-23, 12:24, 1 Pet 1:2, 1 John 1:7; cf Heb 9:14, 13:20 - imagery drawn from the sealing of a covenant, *q.v.*), or who drink it, are receiving the benefits of his death and find shelter from threatening dangers (John 6:53-6, note the parallel with eating the flesh of the Son of Man in the same chapter). The life of the sinner was forfeit and lay under sentence of death until Christ by the shedding of his blood in the suffering of death gave release and cleansing to the sinner (Eph 1:7, 1 Pet 1:18-19, Rev 1:5, 5:9). It is the death of Christ and not his life released which has effected a universal reconciliation through the act of suffering accomplished in history (Col 1:20). The blood of his Cross can only mean the pouring out in death of his earthly human life, a deed which availed and still avails to put men right with God.⁶²

For many centuries, Christ's blood was regarded as synonymous with his redeeming work and invested with a quasi-magical efficacy. Many early paintings of the crucifixion show angels collecting his blood in goblets: for instance, a Calvary by an anonymous master from the southern Netherlands, dating from c 1400 (the oldest painting in Bruges); *The Crucifixion* by Jacopo Di Cione; *The Crucified Christ with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saints and Angels* by Raphael (1483-1520); and *The Blood of the Redeemer*, by Giovanni Bellini (c 1430-1516). St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), in his criticisms of Peter Abelard, wrote:

I was made a sinner by deriving my being from Adam; I am made just by being washed in the blood of Christ. Shall generation by a sinner be sufficient to condemn me and shall not the blood of Christ be sufficient to justify me? Such is the justice that man has obtained through the blood of the Redeemer.⁶³

There is certainly no evidence in Charles Wesley's hymns that "blood" was used as an unthinking cliché, as by the Calvinist preachers referred to. On the contrary, it is something which transforms the believer, something "applied":

Now, e'en now, we all plunge in,
And drink the purple wave,
This the antidote of sin,
'Tis this our souls shall save...⁶⁴

Take the dear purchase of thy blood,
Thy blood shall wash us white as snow,
Present us sanctified to God,
And perfected in love below.⁶⁵

Sprinkle thy blood upon my heart,
And melt it by thy dying love...⁶⁶

And shall not that atoning blood
Of Christ, the everlasting God,
A purer holiness impart,
Make the polluted conscience clean,
And purge our inmost soul from sin,
And sanctify our sprinkled heart? ⁶⁷

I wait to feel thy blood applied,
Thy blood applied shall make me whole.⁶⁸

As we shall see in Chapter 5.2, this "applying" is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The words "feel" and "apply" in these examples are, of course, typical of Charles in his emphasis on experience. We are not simply spared damnation by the cross of Christ, we are healed and sanctified. Indeed, when we refer to what is "applied", the words "blood" and "Christ" become interchangeable:

We who in Christ believe
That he for us hath died,
We all his unknown peace receive,
And feel his blood applied. (*Hymns & Psalms* 728(2)).⁶⁹

Let us feel thy power applying
Christ to every soul, and mine. (*Hymns & Psalms* 298(3)).⁷⁰

All this can be shown to be in accordance with a usage which came naturally to the early Methodists. In April 1740, Charles recorded in his Journal:

Margaret Austin tells me, she has longed for my coming, as a child for the breast. "I was justified", she said, "the first Friday you was at Wapping, with those many others. I saw my Saviour bringing

me a pardon, written in his blood".⁷¹

In December 1738, John enquired of many in the society in London about the state of their souls. One reply (I think it is from a woman) included the following account:

July 5 [1738]. ...That night I went into the garden, and considering what she [her sister, who had already received the atonement] had told me, I saw him by faith,...him who justifieth the ungodly. I told him I was ungodly, and it was for me that he died. His blood did I plead with great faith, to blot out the handwriting that was against me. I told my Saviour, that he had promised to give rest to all that were heavy laden. This promise I claimed, and I saw him by faith, stand before God condemned in my stead. I saw the fountain opened in his side. I found, as I hungered, he fed me; as my soul thirsted, he gave me out of that fountain to drink: and so strong was my faith, that if I had had all the sins of the world laid upon me, I knew and was sure one drop of his blood was sufficient to atone for all. Well, I clave unto him, and he did wash me in his blood.⁷²

Charles wrote, as we have seen, of Christ's blood being "applied". It could purify the conscience:

Let the water and the blood
Be again to my conscience applied.⁷³

and in *The Arminian Magazine* we read how a certain John Manners was under conviction of sin for about three months until

as I was going with a waggon, I seemingly felt the blood of Christ applied to my conscience, and in a few minutes after a clear, full peace, arising from the Witness, that my sins were forgiven. This I never lost afterwards for one hour, though the overpowering joy lasted but a short time.⁷⁴

Sometimes, indeed, this imagery became a little too strong. On 6 September 1742 John examined some of his followers in London on their experience. He was happy to accept that they felt the working of the Spirit of God in joy, and peace, and love; beyond that, he had reservations:

But, as to what some of them said farther concerning "feeling the blood of Christ running upon their arms, or going down their throat, or poured like warm water upon their breast or heart," I plainly told them, "The utmost I could allow, without renouncing both Scripture and reason, was, that some of these circumstances might be from God, (though I could not affirm they were,) working in an unusual manner, no way essential either to justification or sanctification; but that all the rest I must believe to be the mere empty dreams of an heated imagination."⁷⁵

It may be significant that in the previous month John had preached "a very furious sermon" against the Moravians' concentration on Christ's blood and wounds.⁷⁶ In the earliest years after Aldersgate, he had been content to translate such hymns as Zinzendorf's "Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit":

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.⁷⁷

Before long, however, he had acquired a distaste for many aspects of Moravian teaching

and especially for its preoccupation with the blood and wounds of Christ, these images being interwoven with sexual imagery based on the Song of Songs. In 1745 the Moravian Church, fearful of ridicule, ordered that its Litany of the Wounds should not be allowed to fall into anyone's hands. However, in 1753 publication of a *Candid Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Herrnhuters (Moravians)* translated some of their hymns previously unknown to English readers, and revealed the explicitness of that sexual imagery.⁷⁸

Notwithstanding John's strictures on the London society, and perhaps even inspired by such experiences, Charles could write in 1745: "Still, O God, the blood is warm, Covered with the blood we are".⁷⁹ I have quoted many of his hymns which refer to the wounds of Christ, and the Moravians' particular stress on the side-wound⁸⁰ may be reflected in the well-known lines:

And lead them to thy open side
The sheep for who their Shepherd died.⁸¹

Similarly:

His bleeding heart shall make you room,
His open side shall take you in.⁸²

And:

Saviour, from thy wounded side
I never will depart.⁸³

Not surprisingly, other hymn writers of the period found blood imagery helpful. This hymn by William Cowper remains famous even though few hymn books still include it; as J R Watson says in *The English Hymn. A Critical and Historical Study*, it "carries the pictorial representation of soteriological doctrine to an extreme, into a kind of evangelical baroque"⁸⁴:

1. There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.
2. The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

This can be paralleled by many verses from Charles: for instance, he can write:

Thy side an open fountain is,
Where all may freely go,
And drink the living streams of bliss,
And wash them white as snow.⁸⁵

To the fountain of thy blood
 With trembling haste I fly;
 Wash me, O my pardoning God,
 From crimes of deepest dye;
 Purge my every crimson stain,
 And give my burdened conscience ease,
 Turn me to my rest again,
 And bid me die in peace.⁸⁶

It may perhaps come as a surprise to find how frequently he uses this word. I have attempted a survey of Volume 5 of *Poetical Works of J and C Wesley*, which contains the two volumes of *Hymns & Sacred Poems*. Out of 351 hymns, 79 (22%) make reference to the blood of Christ, and some of these many times. Or, to take an example which is still sung ("Arise, my soul, arise", *Hymns & Psalms* 217, first published in *H&SP* 1742), we can note "the bleeding sacrifice" of verse 1, the "precious blood...the blood" which "atoned for all our race" of verse 2, the "five bleeding wounds" of verse 3, and the Spirit who "answers to the blood" of verse 4.

Charles uses "blood" in many different contexts. It is, for instance, the *atoning* blood;⁸⁷ the *covenant* blood;⁸⁸ *sanctifying* blood.⁸⁹ Similarly, he can say that:

His blood shall sanctify throughout/ My spirit, soul, and body *here*.⁹⁰
 His blood shall make me pure within, /His blood shall cleanse me from all sin.⁹¹
 His blood the evil shall remove, /His blood shall wholly sanctify.⁹²
 Thy blood shall wholly sanctify, /The deep original stain erase.⁹³
 God hears thy blood for mercy cry, /And passes all my follies by.⁹⁴
 He bears my sins on yonder tree, /And pays my debt in blood.⁹⁵
 Then thy blood is my relief, /And speaks me justified.⁹⁶

"Blood" is thus used in the context of both justification and sanctification, and as we shall see in Chapter 6 (Christian Perfection) this parallels Wesley's view that the atonement is concerned with both.

We can conclude this chapter by saying that certain salient themes of the Letter to the Hebrews - Priesthood, Sacrifice, Intercession, and Blood - had a strong appeal to Wesley, and were congenial to other evangelicals of his day, though they are largely neglected today.

Notes to Chapter 4

- 1 *H&P 629 (HoLS 1745).*
- 2 Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, Epworth Press, London, 1940, p 184.
- 3 It is perhaps significant that Wesley writes 74 hymns based on Hebrews but only 37 hymns on Romans.
- 4 S W Sykes, *Sacrifice and Redemption*, CUP 1991, p 289.
- 5 Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, Epworth Press, London, 1940, p 186.
- 6 *ib*, p 189.
- 7 Frances Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*, SPCK, London, 1975, p 76.
- 8 Colin Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1988, p 121.
- 9 A N Chester, On p 66 of his article "Hebrews the Final Sacrifice" in *Sacrifice and Redemption* (ed. S W Sykes), CUP 1991, says: "The argument of Hebrews is, then, remarkable. To his Jewish-Christian community, for whom the temple and its cult still hold enormous religious significance, the writer declares that this sacrificial system has been brought to an absolute end".
- 10 Henry Bettenson, *The Later Christian Fathers*, OUP 1972, pp 243–244.
- 11 S W Sykes, *Sacrifice and Redemption*, CUP 1991, p 302.
- 12 J Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, SCM Press, London, 1969, p 149.
- 13 D M Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, Faber & Faber, London, 1961, p 195.
- 14 *Alternative Service Book* Prayer 85.
- 15 *Faith and Order Paper 111*, p 11.
- 16 Charles Gore, *The Body of Christ*, p 211; quoted by D M Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, Faber & Faber, London, 1961, p 195–196.
- 17 *PW* Volume 13, p 140 (*HS 1762*).
- 18 *PW* Volume 13 pp 126–127 (*SH 1762*).
- 19 Margaret Spufford, *Celebration*, Collins Fount Paperbacks, London, 1989, p 38.
- 20 Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island*, Burns Oates, London, 1955, p 68.
- 21 Quoted by Frances Young, *Can These Dry Bones Live?*, SPCK, London, 1982, p 21.
- 22 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 7 (1784), p 191.
- 23 Dr Daniel Brevint (1616–95) was a pastor in France for some years but returned to England in 1661 and was appointed Dean of Lincoln.
- 24 *PW* Volume 3, p 307 (*HoLS 1745*).
- 25 *Hymns & Psalms 629 (HoLS 1745).*
- 26 *Hymns & Psalms 745 (SH 1762).*
- 27 *Hymns & Psalms 690 (H&SP 1739).*
- 28 *PW* Volume 3, p 222 (*Hols 1745*).
- 29 On p 48 of his article "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus" in *Sacrifice and Redemption* (ed. S W Sykes), CUP 1991.
- 30 So Kenneth Swanson in his otherwise very helpful book *Uncommon Prayer*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1989, p 100.
- 31 William Barclay, *Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1958, p 137.
- 32 Michael Winter, *The Atonement*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1995, p 114.
- 33 Arnold Cooper, *The Intercession of Our Lord: Charles Wesley's Eucharistic Hymns Today*, published privately 1998, Birmingham, UK.
- 34 Arnold Cooper, *op cit*, p 93.
- 35 This is the theme of his book *The Forgotten Father*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1980.
- 36 Thomas A Smail, *The Giving Gift*, DLT, London, 1994, p 200.
- 37 *ib*, p 214 footnote.
- 38 *ib*, pp 206–207.
- 39 R S Paul, *The Atonement and the Sacraments*, Abingdon Press, New York, 1960, p 87.
- 40 I have made out a case for this in Appendix G.
- 41 Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V, ¶ 51. I have modernised the spelling somewhat.
- 42 *John Wesley's Journal*, 2 April 1762 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:493ff).

43 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 15 (1792), pp 583-584. The words "he could not pray in vain"
 may have echoed those in "See where before the throne he stands" (page 106).
 44 *Hymns & Psalms* 217 (*H&SP* 1742).
 45 *MHB* 232 (*SH* 1762).
 46 *PW* Volume 7, p 276 (*SH* 1762).
 47 *PW* Volume 3, pp 306-7 (*HoLS* 1745).
 48 *PW* Volume 9, p 36 (*SH* 1762, on Exodus 4:10).
 49 *PW* Volume 3, p 221 (*HoLS* 1745).
 50 *H&P* 185 (*HoGEL* 1741).
 51 *MHB* 188(2,3), All ye that pass by (*H&SP* 1749).
 52 "O for a thousand tongues", *H&P* 744(1) (*H&SP* 1740).
 53 *H&P* 216(1) (*H&SP* 1739).
 54 *H&P* 536(1) (*H&SP* 1742).
 55 *PW* Volume 2, p 240 (*H&SP* 1742).
 56 *PW* Volume 4, p 32 (*Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution*, 1744).
 57 Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, Epworth Press, London, 1989, p 344; Calvin taught that
 there must be literal shedding of blood before forgiveness could be pronounced.
 58 On the other hand, an American Presbyterian minister whom I know tells me that she does not
 refer at all to "blood" in the Communion Service.
 59 Leslie D Weatherhead, *A Plain Man Looks at the Cross*, Independent Press, London, 1945, pp
 152-153.
 60 Bernard Lord Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, Epworth Press, London, 1942, p 126.
 61 *New Century Bible Commentary*, Hebrews, Marshall, Morgan & Scott Publications Ltd,
 Basingstoke, 1987, pp 152 and 176.
 62 *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (ed Alan Richardson), SCM Press London, 1950, p 34.
 63 Quoted by Tony Lane in *The Lion Concise Book of Christian Thought* (Lion, Oxford, 3rd ed.
 1996), p 93.
 64 *PW* Volume 3, p 235 (*HoLS* 1745).
 65 *PW* Volume 5, p 230 (*H&SP* 1742).
 66 *PW* Volume 4, p 442 (*H&SP* 1749).
 67 *PW* Volume 13, p 139 (*SH* 1762).
 68 *PW* Volume 8, p 225 (*HS* 1762).
 69 This hymn (*H&SP* 1749) also contained the lines "Balm of all my grief and pain/ Thy blood is
 always nigh"; "blood" was altered to "grace" as early as 1830 (*Companion to Hymns & Psalms*,
 ed. Watson and Trickett, p 415).
 70 *HoLS* 1745.
 71 *Charles Wesley's Journal*, 5 April 1740 (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 207). One of his later
 hymns (1749) contains the lines "A pardon written in his blood/ The favour, and the peace of
 God". *PW* Volume 5, p 64.
 72 *John Wesley's Journal*, 5 December 1738 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:100).
 73 *PW* Vol 4 pp 411-413 (*H&SP* 1742).
 74 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 3 (1780), p 275.
 75 See his *Journal* for that date (Standard Edition, Vol 3:43f).
 76 Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England 1728-1760*, Oxford Historical Monographs,
 Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, p 76.
 77 *H&P* 225 (*H&SP* 1740).
 78 *Ib*, pp 134-135 and 269.
 79 *PW* Volume 3, p 306-307 (*HoLS* 1745).
 80 Podmore, *op cit*, p 132.
 81 *H&P* 767 (*H&SP* 1749), "Give me the faith which can remove", verse 4.
 82 *H&P* 706 (*H&SP* 1739), "Where shall my wondering soul begin?", verse 5.
 83 *H&P* 729 (*H&SP* 1742), "God of my salvation, hear", verse 5.
 84 J R Watson, *The English Hymn. A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford 1997), p 295.
 85 *PW* Volume 5, p 121-122, "Jesu, thou all-redeeming Lord" (*H&SP* 1749).
 86 *PW* Volume 5, p 204 (*H&SP* 1749).
 87 *H&P* 216 (*H&SP* 1739), "And can it be": original verse 5, "Still the atoning blood is near".
 88 *H&P* 649, "Come, let us use the grace divine", verse 5 (*SH* 1762).
 89 *PW* Volume 7, p 331 (*HT* 1767).
 90 *PW* Volume 5, p 309 ("What is the reason of my hope") (*H&SP* 1749).

- ⁹¹ *PW* Volume 5, p 309 ("What is the reason of my hope") (*H&SP* 1749).
- ⁹² *PW* Volume 10, p 487, no.874 ("The spring of sin is proud self-love") (*SH* 1762).
- ⁹³ *PW* Volume 9, p 247, no.764 on Job 14:4 ("Throughout my fallen soul I own") (first published 1762).
- ⁹⁴ *PW* Volume 2, p 231 ("O God of my salvation, hear") (*H&SP* 1742).
- ⁹⁵ *PW* Volume 3, p 216 (*HoLS* 1745). ("In this expressive bread I see").
- ⁹⁶ *PW* Volume 11, p 269, no.1498 (*SH* 1762).

5. THE METHODIST EMPHASES

In this chapter I shall look at a number of matters on which early Methodism placed considerable emphasis, and from which it derived its particular ethos. These matters are the belief that God's salvation is extended to all; that the benefits of the atonement cannot be received without the witness of the Holy Spirit; that the death of Jesus on the cross can be regarded as in some respects a present experience to the believer; and that salvation is secured by the exercise of "justifying faith" which is not, however, in the nature of a "work" in us. These emphases meant that Methodism differed to a greater or less degree from the non-Methodist stream in the Church of England, from Calvinists, and from the Moravians.

5.1 Christ Died For All

Whose mercy is divinely free
For all the fallen race, and me!¹

The doctrine of Roman Catholicism which the Protestant reformers reacted to most violently was that of salvation by works, or by works and faith combined. They asserted that God's grace was always free and could never be earned; Luther stressed that we needed to do nothing for our salvation but accept it from Christ, so much so that he was frequently seized on in support of antinomian and "stillness" doctrines. We are saved by faith alone, said the Reformers; but the question then arose whether our faith might itself be interpreted as a "work" deserving of merit. The Calvinist solution was to remove salvation from the domain of human will entirely. We are saved, not because of our free will and assent to Christ, but because God has predestined or elected us to salvation. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; none of us deserves to be saved:

Both the elect and the non-elect come into the world in a state of total depravity and alienation from God, and can, of themselves, do nothing but sin.²

But God, in his inscrutable wisdom, and by a decree made before the foundation of the world, has elected certain of us to salvation, and this is not dependent on any merit which he foresaw in us. It follows, of course, that there are others who are not so elected. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1643) contains the following Article:

III. Of God's Eternal Decree

God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass. Yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin or is violence offered to the will of the creatures... By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death... Neither are any redeemed by Christ... but the elect only. The rest of mankind God was pleased... to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath.³

The final reference to being ordained to dishonour and wrath is termed the doctrine of Reprobation. Whether this doctrine was taught by Calvin himself has been questioned,⁴ but it would certainly be true to say that it was systematised by the Westminster Confession and by John Owen (1618-1683), and was current Calvinist teaching in the eighteenth century.

John Wesley was prepared to accept some of the Calvinist tenets (though as time went on, he became more explicitly Arminian).⁵ He conceded that Methodists:

come to the very edge of Calvinism, (1) In ascribing all good to the free grace of God. (2) In denying all natural free-will, and all power antecedent to grace. And (3) In excluding all merit from man; even for what he has or does by the grace of God.⁶

In doing so he may have felt a need to avoid any criticism that he had departed from the doctrines of the Church of England, since Article XVII affirms Predestination:

PREDESTINATION to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour...

This does not however specifically assert the Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement, in other words, that Christ died only for the elect, nor does it assert Reprobation.⁷ An attempt in 1595 to append the strongly predestinarian Nine Lambeth Articles to the Thirty-Nine was abortive. Indeed, Article XXXI states that "The one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross" was "that...perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world", and John wrote that this "explicitly asserts universal redemption".⁸ Nevertheless, it may be noted that John omitted Article XVII when he framed Articles of Religion for the American Church.⁹

He nevertheless did his best to avoid clashing with those who pleaded Article XVII in their cause, and in particular he tried to maintain cordial relations with George Whitefield. These efforts were largely successful, for Whitefield was as prepared to preach the gospel to all as Wesley was to "come to the very edge of Calvinism". Whitefield, preaching on Luke 14:22-24, made this invitation:

Come, then, all ye halt, poor, maimed and blind sinners... Will you taste of Christ's supper, or will you not? You shall all be welcome.¹⁰

That has an obvious ring of Charles's "Come, sinners, to the gospel feast":¹¹

Come, all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

As regards the Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace, the Wesleys seem at first to have believed that an evangelical conversion might preserve a person from sin, but certain lines in Charles's hymns to this effect were altered in the light of experience, and the backslider became a familiar subject of the hymns and of John's Journal. The doctrine came to signify much more of a snare of Satan than a promise. In "O take away the stone",¹² Charles wrote:

Armed with this fiery dart,
The enemy drew nigh,
And preached to my unsettled heart
His bold presumptuous lie;
"You are secure of heaven,"
(The tempter softly says,)
"*You are elect*, and once forgiven
Can never fall from grace."

On the contrary, the Wesleys argued, God's grace, which is offered to all, is *not* irresistible. We are free to accept or refuse. God did predestine some, but only those whom he foreknew would respond (Romans 8:29). This doctrine is neatly summarised by Charles:

1. For every man he tasted death,
He suffered once for all;
He calls as many souls as breathe,
And all may hear his call.
2. A power to choose, a will to obey,
Freely his grace restores;
We all may find the Living Way,
And call the Saviour ours.
3. Whom his eternal mind foreknew,
That they the power would use,
Ascribe to God the glory due,
And not his grace refuse;
4. Them, only them, his will decreed,
Them did he choose alone,
Ordained in Jesus' steps to tread,
And to be like his Son.
5. Them, the elect, consenting few,
Who yield to proffered love,
Justified here he forms anew,
And glorifies above.

6. For as in Adam all have died,
So all in Christ may live,
May (for the world is justified)
His righteousness receive.¹³

One of the most succinct arguments ever advanced against election was made by John Wesley when he wrote, "For the absolutely elect must have been saved without him [Christ]; and the non-elect cannot be saved by him".¹⁴ But what the Wesleys would on no account tolerate was the doctrine of reprobation, that God had from all eternity foreordained some to everlasting punishment, and therefore that the atonement of Christ was limited to the elect. As early as 1740 John preached his sermon on Free Grace,¹⁵ in which he described the doctrines of limited atonement and reprobation as blasphemous:

26. This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the horrible decree of predestination! And here I fix my foot. On this I join issue with every assertor of it. You represent God as worse than the devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust.¹⁶

Basically, the Wesleys agreed with the Arminian doctrines that God had appointed Jesus Christ as Mediator to win salvation for man; that he decreed to accept and save all who would repent and believe in Christ, and to reject impenitent unbelievers; that he had provided the means whereby man could repent and believe; and that he had decreed the salvation of certain individuals who he had foreseen would believe and persevere to the end.¹⁷ John was in no doubt that reprobation was a fundamental part of Calvinist teaching, quoting Calvin himself to the effect that "Many indeed (thinking to excuse God) own election, and yet deny reprobation, but this is silly and childish. For without reprobation, election itself cannot stand; whom God passes by, those he reprobates". He dismissed Calvinist claims that this doctrine did not make God the author of sin and evil.¹⁸

On 14 May 1765 he wrote to a friend:

Just so my brother and I reasoned thirty years ago, "as thinking it our duty to oppose Predestination with our whole strength: not as an opinion, but as a dangerous mistake, which appears to be subversive of the very foundations of Christian experience, and which has in fact given occasion to the most grievous offences."¹⁹

Notice here the appeal to Christian experience. Scriptural support there indeed was: 1 Timothy 2:3b-4 refers to "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (KJV). John found support in:

Romans 14:15, "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died", and
1 Cor. 8:11, "And through thy knowledge shall the weaker brother perish, for whom Christ died?"²⁰

In a "Hymn on Universal Redemption", printed in Volume I of *The Arminian*

Magazine, Charles includes a number of scripture references:

For every man he tasted death,
He suffered once for all²¹
For as in Adam all have died,
So all in Christ may live. ²²
Ho! every one that thirsteth, come!²³
Thee every tongue shall then confess,
And every knee shall bow.²⁴

But it is likely that, with him, experience was the stronger force in practice: after all, he was (in Myers-Briggs terms) much more a “feeling”, and much less a “thinking” person than his brother. He records in his Journal on 22 May 1739:

To-night I asked in prayer that if God would have all men to be saved, He would show some token for good upon us. Three were justified in immediate answer to that prayer. We prayed again; several fell down under the power of God, present to witness His universal love.

On 10-11 April 1741 he visits two women in the throes of death, and records his confidence that they have a vision of truth from God:

I found a dying sinner rejoicing in God her Saviour. At the sight of me she cried out, “O how loving is God to me! But he is loving to every man. He loves every soul as well as he loves mine...”

To-day He called forth another of his dying witnesses: the young woman whom at my last visit I left in utter despair. This morning she broke into “I see, I see it now, that Jesus Christ died for me, and for all the world”. From that time she testified, with much assurance, that Christ gave his life a ransom for all. Some of her words to me were, “...Your report is true. God is love; pure love; love to every man. The Spirit which is in me tells me, that Jesus Christ died for me, and the whole world”.

A few days later he recorded:

April 14th [1741]. While I was, in great love, warning the bands, the Spirit of power came down; the Fountain was set open; my mouth and heart were enlarged; and I spoke such words as I cannot repeat. Many sunk under the love of Christ crucified, and were constrained to break out, “Christ died for all!”

It is not surprising that he very quickly ran into controversy with the Calvinists. On 22 August 1739 he writes:

Mrs Seward is irreconcilably angry with me: “for he offers Christ to all.” Her maids are of the same spirit; and their Baptist teacher insists that I ought to have my gown stripped over my ears. When Mr Seward, in my hearing, exhorted one of the maids to a concern for her salvation, she answered, “it was to no purpose; she could do nothing.” The same answer he received from his daughter, of seven years old. See the genuine fruits of this blessed doctrine!

In his hymns and sermons, therefore, Charles unequivocally asserted that God called all the human race, and that all might be saved. On 20 September 1739 he writes again:

At the Hall I explained Rom. ix. Through mercy, we could none of us see aught of the “horrible decree”²⁵ there; but only his justice in rejecting them who had first rejected Him.

In his journal entry for 12 July 1741, he relates that he declared “the two great truths of

the everlasting gospel, universal redemption and Christian perfection". Likewise he "enforced His universal call, 'look to me and be saved, *all* the ends of the earth'".²⁶ It is not surprising, then, that he introduced Arminian doctrine into his hymns in a way which can only be described as fearlessly outspoken. That Christ died for all is noted, says John R Tyson, over three hundred times in his later hymns alone.²⁷ It is a doctrine which remains well represented in the current Methodist hymn book:

O let thy love my heart control,
Thy love for every sinner free,
That every fallen human soul
May taste the grace that found out me;
That all mankind with me may prove
Thy sovereign, everlasting love!²⁸

Or take another familiar hymn, and (as Bernard Lord Manning bids us,²⁹ "notice the stab at debased Calvinism in every line" (the italics are in the original):

1. Father, whose *everlasting love*
Thy only Son for sinners gave;
Whose grace to *all* did *freely* move,
And sent him down *the world to save*:
2. Help us thy mercy to extol,
Immense, unfathomed, *unconfined*;
To praise the Lamb who *died for all*,
The *general Saviour of mankind*.
3. Thy *undistinguishing regard*
Was cast on Adam's fallen race;
For *all* thou hast in Christ prepared
Sufficient, sovereign, saving grace.
4. *The world* he suffered to redeem:
For all he hath the atonement made:
For those that will not come to him
The ransom of his life was paid.
5. Arise, O God, maintain thy cause!
The fulness of the Gentiles call:
Lift up the standard of thy cross,
And *all* shall own thou diedst *for all*.³⁰

Referring, no doubt, to the statement in 1 Timothy 2:3b–4 already quoted ("God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (KJV)) Charles writes:

Plenteous he is in truth and grace;
He wills that all the fallen race
Should turn, repent, and live...³¹

How could Christ, in his love, die for some, and not for others?

Did Jesus for the world atone?
"Yes; for the world of the elect:"
Love could not die for some alone,
And all the wretched rest neglect...³²

Reprobation would, in fact, make Christ less loving than believers, who would happily give up their own lives for sinners:

10. To thee, for all men lifted up,
O let them still their witness bear,
And, shouting from the mountain-top,
The Saviour of the world declare. -
11. "He willeth not the sinner's death,
He died for all, he none passed by;
Since we would now resign our breath,
For every soul of man would die".³³
Enlarge my heart to all mankind,
The purchase of thy dying groan;
O let me by this token find
They all are thy redeemed ones:
For if I loved whom God abhorred,
The servant were above his Lord.³⁴

One would have to be thoroughly evil oneself to accept such a fiendish doctrine:

7. I *could* the devil's law receive,
Unless restrained by thee;
I *could* (good God!) I *could* believe
The HORRIBLE DECREE.
8. I *could* believe that God is hate, -
The God of love and grace
Did damn, pass by, and reprobate
The most of human race.³⁵

It was no defence to say that, since all deserved, in their total depravity, to die, God did not act unjustly in passing some by:

12. ...Ye potsherds of the earth, presume
To disunite the Trinity.
13. "Since God *might justly let all die,*
And leave all to eternal woe,
Might he not justly some pass by?
The wounds of Jesus answer, No!³⁶

One of his most celebrated onslaughts on the Calvinists was the following (headed "O HORRIBLE DECREE"³⁷ in "Hymns on God's Everlasting Love"): ³⁸

6. Sinners, abhor the fiend:
His *other* gospel hear -
The God of truth did not intend
The things his words declare;
He offers grace to all,
Which most cannot embrace,
Mocked with an ineffectual call
And insufficient grace."
7. "The righteous God consigned
Them over to their doom,
And sent the Saviour of mankind
To damn them from the womb:
To damn for falling short

*Of what they could not do,
For not believing the report
Of that which was not true."*

8. *The God of love passed by
The most of those that fell,
Ordained poor reprobates to die,
And forced them into hell."
"He did not do the deed
(Some have more mildly raved),
He did not damn them – but decreed
They never should be saved." ...*
15. O take me at my word
But arm me with thy power,
Then call me forth to suffer, Lord,
To meet the fiery hour:
In death I will proclaim
That all *may* hear thy call,
And clap my hands amidst the flame,
And shout, – HE DIED FOR ALL.

In less impassioned, but still decisive terms, he writes:

Mercy I keep for all mankind,
An infinite, exhaustless store,
A sea unfathomed, unconfined;
To All, to All, my love runs o'er;
Sinners may all my mercy prove;
My first great attribute is love.³⁹

Charles also wrote a striking poem which appeared in *The Arminian Magazine* entitled *The Lord's Controversy* in which he compares the Calvinists to the priests of Baal.⁴⁰

"Nothing did so much to destroy popular Calvinism in England as Charles Wesley's hymns", wrote J E Rattenbury.⁴¹ Not even Toplady⁴² could stem the tide of his Arminianism when he wrote:

Sorrows and agonies and death,
Thou didst endure for me,
When all the sins of God's Elect
Were made to meet on thee.⁴³

And if Christ died for all, surely also he died for me! We can remind ourselves of John Wesley's Journal entry for 24 May 1738:

... I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.⁴⁴

Significantly, this followed upon a reading of Luther's *Preface* to the Letter to the Romans. In his *Preface* to Galatians, which greatly influenced Charles (see below), Luther had written regarding the words in Galatians 2:20 ("I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"):

Wherefore these words: *Which loved me*, are full of faith. And he that can utter this word, *Me*, and apply it unto himself with a true and constant faith, as *Paul* did, shall be a good disputant with *Paul* against the law. And this manner of applying is the very true force and power of faith. Reade therefore with great vehemence these words, *Me*, and *for me*, and so inwardly practise with thyself, that thou, with a sure faith maist conceive and print this *Me* in thy heart, and apply it unto thy self, not doubting that thou art in the number of those to whom this *Me* belongeth.⁴⁵

A few days before his Pentecost experience in 1738, Charles had testified to the impact which these words had had on him:

I spent some hours this evening in private with Martin Luther, who was greatly blessed to me, especially his conclusion of the 2nd chapter [of Galatians]. I laboured, waited, and prayed to feel "who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*". When nature, near exhausted, forced me to bed, I opened the book upon "For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon earth." After this comfortable assurance that He would come, and would not tarry, I slept in peace.⁴⁶

Although Charles's account of his "conversion" experience a few days later did not emphasise "for *me*" in the same way as John, there is independent evidence that it was a crucial part of the change wrought in him. In his Journal entry for 16 June 1738 he writes of singing the words "Who for me, for me hast died", an evident reference to the hymn "O filial Deity":⁴⁷

O filial Deity,
Accept my new-born cry!
See the travail of my soul,
Saviour, and be satisfied:
Take me now, possess me whole,
Who for me, for me, hast died!

On 2 July 1738 he met at the house of Mr Sims, in the Minories, a Mrs Harper, who had that day:

received the Spirit, by the hearing of faith; but feared to confess it. We sang the hymn to Christ. At the words "Who for me, for me, hast died!", she burst out into tears and outcries, "I believe! I believe!" and sank down. She continued, and increased in the assurance of faith; full of peace, and joy, and love. I asked her what ailed her. She answered, as soon as joy would let her, that "Christ died for her!" She appeared quite overpowered with His love.⁴⁸

Consciousness of the miracle that Christ should love him and die for him permeates his hymns. God's grace is

So wide it never passed by one,
Or it had passed by me.⁴⁹

Likewise, he asks for the Holy Spirit's witness that Christ,

Who did for every sinner die,
Hath surely died for me.⁵⁰

For *I* have a share in the collective responsibility of mankind for the death of Christ:

We have not, Lord, thy gifts improved,
But basely from thy statutes roved,
And done thy loving Spirit despite,

And sinned against the clearest light,
Brought back thine agonising pain,
And nailed thee to thy cross again.⁵¹

Yes, our sins have done the deed,
Drove the nails that fixed him here,
Crowned with thorns his sacred head
Pierced him with a soldier's spear,
Made his soul a sacrifice;
For a guilty world he dies.⁵²

And, of course, in more familiar words:

Died he for me, who caused his pain,
For me, who him to death pursued?
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!⁵³

The *Account of the Life of Alexander Mather*⁵⁴ relates how a condemned criminal, on hearing the Methodists sing

His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.⁵⁵

rejoiced with joy unspeakable.⁵⁶ Likewise Thomas Olivers,⁵⁷ on reading the text "who will have all men to be saved", wrote: "This struck me exceedingly; as which I reasoned thus: 'Will God have all men to be saved? Then I am not excluded. Did Christ give Himself for all? Then he gave Himself for me...'.⁵⁸ No-one, therefore, is beyond the reach of this grace; Christ died even for Cain, Esau, or Judas (these being often cited as examples of those reprobated by God). As Charles concluded:

Thou didst not mock our race
With insufficient grace;
Thou hast reprobated none,
Thou from Pharoah's blood art free;
Thou didst once for all atone -
Judas, Esau, Cain, and me.⁵⁹

The question inevitably arises whether Wesley was a universalist, in the sense that he believed all would eventually and inevitably be saved. The Calvinists, with their doctrine of *irresistible grace*, assumed that any doctrine of grace for all must have this result. The Church of England was less rigorous on universal salvation than we might suppose: it is true that in 1552 its Articles condemned the belief that hell was only temporary and all men would be saved at the last; but in 1562 this article was dropped.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, there is no question that Wesley believed in hell for those who refused God's grace, and a hell from which there was no redemption, no escape:

Who wilfully refuse
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
Deserve themselves to lose
And in delusion stray,
Deprived of grace while here they breathe,
And then to die the endless death.⁶¹

Can they discharge the debt in hell,
Or satisfy thy justice there?
They must with endless burnings dwell,
They must eternal torments bear,
For ever and for ever prove
That God is truth, as well as love.⁶²

Who *will* reject thy richest grace
Their own damnation seal,
And justly claim for their own place
The hottest place in hell.⁶³

God never alienates his right
To souls he loves so well;
They sell themselves for sin's delight
To Satan and to hell:
And who in Christ can have no share
They must tormented be,
And groan without redemption there
Through all eternity.⁶⁴

But we are left wondering whether such a view can be sustained in logic, and at other times the drift of his thoughts is clearly universalist. It is true that he emphasises the conditional nature of salvation in some lines:

2. We bless the saving name,
Jesus, the sinner's peace,
The Saviour of mankind, proclaim,
The Lord our Righteousness,
Whose gift is come to all;
For all the Lamb hath died;
The world *may* listen to his call,
The world is justified.⁶⁵

Perhaps, indeed, only a few will respond:

10. Whom his eternal mind *foreknew*,
That they the power would use,
Ascribe to God the glory due,
And not his grace refuse;
11. Them, only them his will *decreed*
Them did he choose alone,
Ordained in Jesu's steps to tread,
And to be like his Son.
12. Them, the *elect*, consenting few,
Who yield to proffered love,
Justified here, he *forms anew*,
And *glorifies* above.⁶⁶

But his Christian hope is that the love of God for the whole human race will prevail:

8. No one of Adam's race
Shall then unsaved be found,

But peace and righteousness
Throughout the earth abound;
The thrones shall to thy saints be given,
And the new earth be turned to heaven.⁶⁷

3. By the miracle of grace
Bring every outcast in,
Show to all our ransomed race
The power that saves from sin;
All our ransomed race convert,
That every child of man may prove
Thee residing in his heart,
And know that God is love.
4. God in Christ is love to me,
He loves me for thy sake,
Loves us all as part of thee
Who didst our nature take:
Wills our God that all should live,
Through faith in thee his favourite Son
Should thy proffered joy receive,
And triumph on thy throne.⁶⁸

1. Father, thy heavenly voice I own,
Propitious through thy favourite Son
I know thou art to me:
Clothed with his blood and righteousness,
Accepted in his worth, I bless
Thy gracious Majesty.
2. But did he not our nature take,
The grace and favour for his sake
That every soul might find?
To Jesus our whole race unite,
And then eternally delight
In all our ransomed kind.⁶⁹

Here we are going beyond a mere assertion that God's grace is available to all who are willing to receive it. God's will is that all *should* receive it, and his joy will not be complete until all have done so. If some should eternally perish, that is a defeat for God's purpose in creation and redemption, and calls into question his omnipotence.

In one case his implicit universalism was too much for John, who reckoned among the "three grand errors" of the Moravians the doctrine of Universal Salvation:⁷⁰

3. Come then, the true celestial Vine,
The Tree of life, the Root of grace,
Claim the wild olive trees for thine,
Spring up in all our ransomed race,
And if concealed in all thou art,*
Be found this moment in my heart.⁷¹

* No. JW.

The "wild olive trees" is a reference to Romans 11:24, and it seems that Charles saw an analogy between the Gentiles becoming God's chosen people and sinners (reprobates)

being saved:

Heathens hear what Jews reject,
Cordially the truth embrace,
Reprobates become elect,
Constitute the chosen race...⁷²

It is, however, not just those who respond to the call who become elect in this way: it is all mankind:

1. Nothing unclean can come from heaven;
We all were pure as made by God:
And God his only Son hath given
To wash the nations in his blood:
Jesus the middle wall removed,
He made both Jews and Gentiles one,
And all are now in Christ beloved,
And all are God's through Christ alone.
2. The creature was created good,
Though since defiled and marred by sin,
But Jesus poured the sacred blood
Which made a world of sinners clean:
Our pristine purity restored
By water, and by blood, we find,
And HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD
Is wrote afresh on all mankind.⁷³

No doubt Charles would have said to critics that this must be taken in context, and "all mankind" is not to be interpreted as "every human being" but as "both Gentiles and Jews" as opposed to "Jews alone". But his language is unguarded, and he was reacting strongly, as always, against the doctrine of reprobation. In heart he was surely a universalist, even if in his head he accepted the prevalent doctrine that some sinners were destined for eternal punishment.

5.2 The Holy Spirit and the Atonement

Come, thou everlasting Spirit,
Bring to every thankful mind
All the Saviour's dying merit,
All his sufferings for mankind.⁷⁴

"It is", writes Vincent Taylor in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, "one of the outstanding merits of R C Moberly's theology that he so closely associates the work of the Holy Spirit with the Atonement".⁷⁵ The same writer is also singled out for praise by George Carey in *The Gate of Glory*; he says:

I can only think of one substantial book which considers the link in any serious way and that is R C Moberly's "Atonement and Personality" which makes an impassioned plea for a recovery of the work of the Spirit in the ministry of the Son on the cross.⁷⁶

Moberly wrote in 1901, and no doubt the earlier neglect of the work of the Holy Spirit in the atonement was caused by the desire to make it an objective transaction not dependent on our reactions. The "moral influence" theory still arouses disfavour among more conservative theologians. But, whatever its shortcomings, it preserves the truth that the atonement is only effective in so far as it reconciles us to God. An objective transaction between Father and Son which was not appropriated in the lives of Christians would serve no purpose whatsoever.

The Methodist Revival was, above all else, a movement of the Holy Spirit. Francis Frost puts it well when he says,⁷⁷ "One could almost define the Methodist movement as a making incandescent of Anglican credal orthodoxy in the fire of the love of the Holy Spirit". All the phenomena which we associate with the present-day "Toronto Blessing", as well as with the Great Awakening in New England, or with early Quakerism, was present there also. Colin Podmore, in his book *The Moravian Church in England 1728-1760*, shows the extent of the Moravian Christians on the evangelical revival in England, of which Methodism was one offshoot. He traces the missionary expansion of Moravianism back to an outpouring of the Spirit at Berthelsdorf on 13 August 1727, and then refers to the celebrated love-feast at Fetter Lane on 1 January 1739, of which John Wesley's account runs:

Mr Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins and my brother Charles, were present at our love-feast in Fetter-lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord."⁷⁸

This incident, says Podmore, "marked the beginning of a year in which the Revival was to overflow the confines of the Fetter Lane Society and spread into other parts of England... [and] the turning point at which the Revival's focus moved from devotional revitalisation in London to evangelism throughout England."⁷⁹ It would be hard to prove that this incident was so crucial, but Podmore's point should not be dismissed. John Wesley began his field-preaching only three months later,⁸⁰ and if he lays no subsequent emphasis on the incident it may well have been because he associated it with Moravian influence; before the end of the year he was contemplating a break from them, and this actually took place in July 1740.⁸¹ Podmore shows that Wesley's statements on the

Moravian influence are not always historically accurate.⁸²

The experiences of the Wesleys themselves in May 1738 are conventionally referred to as conversion, but this was certainly not conversion in its usual sense, for in intellectual terms they understood and accepted the gospel already. In 1765 John wrote:

[On] January 1, 1733, I preached the Sermon on the Circumcision of the Heart; which concerns all that I now teach concerning salvation from sin, and loving God with an undivided heart.

and on 1 September 1778 he wrote:

I know not that I can write a better [sermon] on the Circumcision of the Heart than I did five and forty years ago.⁸³

It should however be noted that he added ten lines on faith to his original text after 1738,⁸⁴ and that references in his other sermons to faith are confined before May 1738 to the faith of the Church or the Christian faith, whereas after that date they embrace personal faith. In so far as it was a conversion, it was (as he himself recognised from 1767 onwards) a conversion from "the faith of a servant" to "the faith of a son".⁸⁵

Both brothers show an ambivalent attitude towards those experiences. It is well known that John wrote in his Journal for 29 January 1738:

It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why, (what I the least of all suspected,) that I who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God.⁸⁶

But then he writes his equally famous footnote, "I am not sure of this"; and a rather different complexion is put on matters by what George Whitefield⁸⁷ entered in his journal at Savannah on 2 June 1738:

The good which Mr John Wesley has done in America, under God, is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people; and he has laid such a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake. Oh that I may follow him, as he has Christ!⁸⁸

Much later, in 1772, John wrote to Charles:

I often cry out, "*vitae me rede priori*". Let me be again an Oxford Methodist. I am often in doubt whether it would be best for me to resume all my Oxford rules, great and small. I did then walk closely with God, and redeemed the time. But what have I been doing these thirty years?⁸⁹

Perhaps most significant was his statement to the 1765 Conference:

Q. What was the rise of Methodism, so called?

A. In 1729, my brother and I read the Bible; saw inward and outward *holiness* therein; followed it, and incited others to do so. In 1737 we saw, "This holiness comes by *faith*." In 1738 we saw, "We must be *justified* before we are sanctified." But still holiness was our point, inward and outward holiness.

I would conclude, then, that in later years he saw his spiritual journey from 1729 onwards as a progression with distinct stages, rather than as a period of unbelief followed by a cataclysmic change in 1738.

Charles also viewed his Pentecost experience with ambivalence. On Whit Sunday 1760 he wrote to his wife Sally:

This I once called the anniversary of my conversion. Just twenty-two years ago I thought I received the first grain of faith. But what does that avail me, if I have not the Spirit now?

No doubt the main emphasis here is on what might have been lost since 1738, rather than whether his personal faith began on that day; but the statement suggests that Charles has found a fuller perspective in which not everything before May 1738 was bad and not everything after that date was good.

The difference between May 1738 and what went before was not, therefore, a "conversion" in the sense of turning from a sinful lifestyle towards the demands and privileges of the gospel, but an overwhelming experience of the truth of the gospel they already preached,⁹⁰ a release from striving to satisfy the demands of the moral law, and the power to preach the gospel with conviction (which included, in the case of Charles, the ability to express it through hymns).

It is not surprising that John began to define Christianity in terms of receiving the Holy Spirit. A Christian, he said, is one who is "anointed with the Holy Spirit, and with power".⁹¹ In 1744 he believed that no-one had salvation until he had received the Spirit.⁹² After 1738, one of his favourite texts was "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost".⁹³ Randy L Maddox draws our attention to the part which the Wesley's father, Samuel, may have played in this. In his letter to "John Smith" dated 22 March 1748, John wrote:

My father did not die unacquainted with the faith of the gospel, of the primitive Christians, or of our first Reformers - the same which, by the grace of God, I preach, and which is just as new as Christianity. What he experienced before I knew not; but I know that during his last illness, which continued eight months, he enjoyed a clear sense of his assurance with God. I heard him express it more than once, although at that time I understood him not. "The inward witness, son, the inward witness", said he to me, "that is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity"... I cannot therefore doubt that the Spirit of God bore an inward witness with his spirit that he was a child of God.⁹⁴

The well-known vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 strongly appealed to the Wesleys. On 22 September 1768, John preached at Axminster:

Observing many there who seemed quite unawakened, I opened and strongly applied Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones: Lord, "breathe upon these slain, that they may live."⁹⁵

In a similar vein Charles wrote of his preaching on Kennington Common:

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and I prophesied, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord". Truly there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry. But as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold, a shaking, which we both saw and heard. Into some, I am confident, the breath came, and they lived.⁹⁶

Here the Wesleys are referring to the role of the Holy Spirit in justification, implanting a conviction that Christ died for the sinner, that each is pardoned, and that each is a child of God. In so doing, they are drawing upon scriptural authority. In Romans 8:15b-16 St Paul writes:

And by him we cry "*Abba*, Father". The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Likewise in 1 Corinthians 12:3 he writes:

no-one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit".

In other words, knowledge of this intimate kind can only be conveyed by the Spirit. This, for the Wesleys, was the lesson of Pentecost and Aldersgate Street in 1738. It is the difference between "head knowledge" and "heart knowledge". John himself defined it thus:

But what is that testimony of God's Spirit, which is superadded to, and conjoined with, this [the testimony of our own spirit]? How does he "bear witness with our own spirit that we are the children of God"? It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain "the deep things of God." Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, to soften, or to strengthen the expression,) the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.⁹⁷

Such an experience emerges particularly clearly from the life of Silas Told,⁹⁸ who narrates what happened during a discourse by John:

I plainly saw I could never be saved without knowing my sins were forgiven; and the Spirit of God sealed every word upon my heart. At the close of the discourse, however strange it may appear, a still small voice entered my heart with these words, "This is the truth!", and instantly I felt it in my soul.⁹⁹

Charles too recognised the vital role of the Holy Spirit in reconciling us to God. Not long after his Pentecost experience, on 27 September 1738, he records:

I stopped and prayed that he [Mr Combes] might believe. Immediately, he told me, he was in such a blessed temper as he had never before experienced. We halted, and went to prayers. He testified the great delight he felt, saying, it was heaven, if it would but continue. While we were discoursing, the fire within him, he said, diffused itself through every part; he was brim-full of joy (yet not knowing he believed), and eager to praise God. He called upon me to join. "Was I now in heaven, I could not think of my sins; I should only think of praising God". We sang and shouted all the way to Oxford.

Paramount among his hymns on this subject is one which Methodists will be familiar with: "Spirit of faith, come down" (*Hymns & Psalms* 325; *HPT* 1746):

1. Spirit of faith, come down,
Reveal the things of God;
And make to us the Godhead known,
And witness with the blood:
Tis thine the blood to apply,
And give us eyes to see,
Who did for every sinner die,
Hath surely died for me.
2. No man can truly say
That Jesus is the Lord,
Unless thou take the veil away,
And breathe the living word;
Then, only then, we feel
Our interest in his blood,
And cry, with joy unspeakable,
"Thou art my Lord, my God!"
3. O that the world might know
The all-atoning Lamb!
Spirit of faith, descend, and show
The virtue of his name;
The grace which all may find,
The saving power, impart,
And testify to all mankind,
And speak in every heart.

Notice, in particular, the words "'Tis thine the blood to apply": Tyson reminds us that "*Blood* was one of Charles's favourite terms for describing the saving effects of Jesus' death"¹⁰⁰; "'blood' in Wesleyan poetical parlance represented the death of Christ in its saving significance; thus, to have 'felt the blood applied' suggested forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God in the emotive context of peace, assurance and liberation".¹⁰¹ It is to be "felt", that is, experienced, and in his hymns written after 1749 words like "feel" or "felt" occurred over two hundred times;¹⁰² similarly, Tyson tells us, "know" occurred nearly 300 times in his later hymns, and over 81 times in his few surviving sermons. But to "know" and "feel" that Christ's blood is being applied is only possible through the Holy Spirit. Hence the lines in "Arise, my soul, arise":

His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.¹⁰³

In *The Life and Death of Thomas Walsh*,¹⁰⁴ the following lines are quoted:

The Saviour hath died for me and for you;
The blood is applied, the record is true;
The Spirit bears witness, and speaks in the blood,
And gives us the fitness for living with God!

In a similar, but now forgotten hymn, "Holy Ghost, remove the grief",¹⁰⁵ Charles writes:

Faith's appropriating power
With thee I long to feel;
Come in this accepted hour
My Saviour—Lord reveal,
By thine energy constrain
My soul to cry with joy unknown,
Very God was very Man,
And Christ is all my own.

We have already noted a hymn, previously in the Holy Communion section of *MHB*, but now in the Holy Spirit section of *Hymns & Psalms* (298):

1. Come, thou everlasting Spirit,
Bring to every thankful mind,
All the Saviour's dying merit,
All his sufferings for mankind.
2. True recorder of his passion,
Now the living faith impart,
Now reveal his great salvation,
Preach his gospel to our heart.
3. Come, thou witness of his dying;
Come, remembrancer divine,
Let us feel thy power, applying
Christ to every soul, and mine.

The assurance of sins forgiven was to be experienced, to be *felt*, by the ordinary Methodist believer. Indeed, such assurance was for a time a *sine qua non* of Methodist belief, though it was later toned down somewhat:

When fifty years ago, my brother Charles and I, in the simplicity of our heart, told the good people of England that unless they knew their sins were forgiven they were under the wrath and curse of God, I marvel...they did not stone us. The Methodists, I hope, know better now. We preach assurance as we always did, as a common privilege of the children of God, but we do not enforce it under the pain of damnation.¹⁰⁶

It was in fact one of the strongest criticisms levelled against the movement by others in the Church that unlettered men and women could assert that they *knew* their sins forgiven, even without absolution by a priest. Even a devout churchgoer such as Dr Johnson could express his fear to Dr Adams that he would be "Sent to Hell, Sir, and punished everlastingly".¹⁰⁷ To Bishop Butler, the claim to have "extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost" was "A horrid thing, Sir, a very horrid thing".¹⁰⁸ Contemporary Calvinists, rejecting Calvin's own view, regarded assurance as something

not merely inessential for the believer but as highly suspect.¹⁰⁹ But the Methodist's conviction was voiced by Charles Wesley:

How can a sinner know
His sins on earth forgiven?
How can my gracious Saviour show
My name *inscribed in heaven*?
What we have felt and seen,
With confidence we tell;
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.¹¹⁰

Likewise:

The Spirit of my God
Hath certified him mine,
And all the tokens showed,
Infallible, Divine;
Hereby the pardoned sinner knows
His sins on earth forgiven,
And thus my faithful Saviour *shows*
My name inscribed in heaven.¹¹¹

Similarly, he fastens on the words in Hebrews 4:16:

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. –

and translates them into the climax of one of his best-known hymns, "And can it be":

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

The same sentiment is in "Tis finished! The Messiah dies":¹¹²

Death, hell, and sin are now subdued;
All grace is now to sinners given;
And lo, I plead the atoning blood,
And in thy right I claim my heaven!

Wesley was not completely alone among eighteenth-century hymn writers in stressing the work of the Holy Spirit, for John Newton makes the same point in his hymn "Alas! by nature how depraved":¹¹³

5. Yet one more thing must grace provide,
To bring us home to God,
Or we shall slight the Lord who died,
And trample on his blood.
6. The Holy Spirit must reveal
The Saviour's work and worth;
Then the hard heart begins to feel
A new and heavenly birth.

Nevertheless, in Wesley's hymns emphasis on the role of the Spirit is much more marked than in other writers. As Norman P Goldhawk has written:

While a description of the work of the Holy Spirit within Christian experience is to some extent common to all periods of hymnody, it is to Charles Wesley that the crown for such an undertaking must be awarded.¹¹⁴

It is this emphasis on the Holy Spirit which best indicates the dynamic quality of Methodism as a revivalist movement within the history of Christianity, a dynamism which was to make it increasingly difficult for it to remain within the narrow and restricting confines of the Established Church.

5.3 Experiencing the Cross in the Present

He lives for us to intercede,
For us he doth this moment plead,
And all who could not see him die
May now with faith's interior eye
Behold him stand as slaughtered there,
And feel the answer to his prayer.¹¹⁵

Readers of George Eliot's *Adam Bede* may remember Dinah Morris's sermon:

"See!" she exclaimed, turning to the left, with her eyes fixed on a point over the heads of the people - "see where our blessed Lord stands and weeps, and stretches out his arms towards you. Hear what he says: 'How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!'...and ye would not," she repeated, in a tone of pleading reproach, turning her eyes on the people again. "See the print of the nails on his dear hands and feet. It is your sins that made them! Ah! How pale and worn he looks! He has gone through all that great agony in the garden, when his soul was sorrowful even unto death and the great drops of sweat fell like blood to the ground. They spat upon him and buffeted him, they scourged him, they mocked him, they laid the heavy cross on his bruised shoulders. Then they nailed him up. Ah! What pain! His lips are parched with thirst, and they mock him still in his great agony; yet with those parched lips he prays for them, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Then a horror of great darkness fell upon him, and he felt what sinners feel when they are for ever shut out from God. That was the last drop in the cup of bitterness. 'My God, my God,' he cries, 'why hast Thou forsaken me?'

"All this he bore for you! For you - and you never think of him; for you - and you turn your backs on him; you don't care what he has gone through for you..."¹¹⁶

When we take account of the fact that visions of the cross were part of the experience of the early Methodists, that their preachers encouraged them to seek and to dwell on such visions, and that many of Charles Wesley's hymns graphically portray Christ's sufferings, George Eliot's description rings true (see, particularly, Appendix A.6 for a hymn of this kind).

In his Journal for 29 August 1748, John Wesley records:

I preached at Davy-Hulme. I had heard a surprising account concerning a young woman of Manchester, which I now received from her own mouth. She said, "On Friday the 4th of last March, I was sitting in the house while one read the passion-hymn. I had always before thought myself good enough, having constantly gone to church and said my prayers, nor had I ever heard any of the Methodist Preachers. On a sudden I saw our Saviour on the cross as plain as if it had been with my bodily eyes; and I felt it was my sins for which he died... This lasted till Monday in the afternoon. Then I saw...a large book in which all my sins were written; and he blotted them all out, and my heart was filled with peace, and joy, and love, which I have never lost to this hour."¹¹⁷

John Nelson's¹¹⁸ Journal describes a similar experience:

I kneeled before the Lord some time, and saw myself a criminal before the Judge: then I said, "Lord, thy will be done; damn or save!" That moment Jesus Christ was as evidently set before the eye of my mind, as crucified for my sins, as if I had seen him with my bodily eyes; and in that instant my heart was set at liberty from guilt and tormenting fear, and filled with a calm and serene peace. I could then say, without any dread or fear, "Thou art my Lord and my God".¹¹⁹

In about 1738 William Grimshaw¹²⁰ of Haworth:

Thought he evidently saw the Lord Jesus put down his hands and feet as it were below the ceiling, and he had time enough to see the nail holes in them, which he observed to be ragged and blueish, and fresh blood streaming from each of them. Instantly he was filled with a joyful sense of his interest in Christ.¹²¹

Not dissimilar was the experience of Sampson Staniforth:¹²²

But as I looked up to heaven I saw the clouds exceeding bright, and I saw Jesus hanging on the cross. At the same moment these words were applied to my heart, "Thy sins are forgiven thee". My chains fell off; my heart was free. All guilt was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace. I loved God and all mankind, and the fear of death and hell was vanished away.

Experiences of this kind gave the believer a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, and marked the beginning of assurance. Such intense ones as those above may have been unusual, hence John's surprise at the first account mentioned. Nevertheless, to contemplate the cross with the eye of faith has always been a powerful part of, and stimulant to, devotion. It is likely that the enduring popularity of Isaac Watts's hymn "When I survey the wondrous cross" results from precisely this desire to contemplate and be changed.

Such experiences are widely reflected in Charles Wesley's hymns, and from a study of them five points emerge:

- it is the sight of Jesus on the cross which is above all powerful to convert sinners;
- this effect on us is the work of the Holy Spirit;
- the death of Christ is to be thought of as occurring even now;
- remembrance of his sufferings is particularly appropriate for the Lord's Supper;
- the sufferings of the Son are "presented" to the Father.

The power to convert

In Wesley's view, then, it was the sight (with the eye of faith) of Jesus on the cross which was above all powerful to convert sinners. He writes of

...His astonishing grace
To the reprobate race,
Who are saved and set free
By a sight of the Lamb as he hangs on the tree.¹²³

Hence the invitation, in "Come, sinners, to the gospel feast":¹²⁴

See him set forth before your eyes;
Behold the bleeding sacrifice!
His offered benefits embrace,
And freely now be saved by grace.

Similarly, in "Come, to the Supper come"¹²⁵, Charles writes:

2. In this authentic sign
Behold the stamp divine;
Christ revives his sufferings here,
Still exposes them to view,
See the Crucified appear
Now believe he died for you!

George Shadford¹²⁶ is an example of a man converted in this way:

I cried out (so that others might hear, being pierced to the heart by the sword of the Spirit,) "God be merciful to me a sinner!" No sooner had I expressed these words, but by the eye of faith, (not with my bodily eyes) I saw Christ, my Advocate, at the right hand of God, making intercession for me. I believed He loved me, and gave Himself for me. In an instant the Lord filled my soul with Divine love, as quick as lightning; so suddenly did the Lord, whom I sought, come to His temple.¹²⁷

The work of the Holy Spirit

Experiences of this kind are, in Charles's thought, necessarily the work of the Holy Spirit. Geoffrey Wainwright considers it a "remarkable" aspect of his hymns that the Spirit is invoked as "witness of the sufferings" of Christ, an image drawn from the Clementine Liturgy. "It is in this capacity that the Holy Spirit becomes the Divine Agent of the eucharistic anamnesis, the 'Recorder' or 'Remembrancer' at the royal court."¹²⁸

The hymn he refers to is still sung:

1. Come, thou everlasting Spirit
Bring to every thankful mind
All the Saviour's dying merit,
All his sufferings for mankind.
2. True recorder of his passion,
Now the living faith impart,
Now reveal his great salvation,
Preach his gospel to our heart.

3. Come, thou witness of his dying,
Come, remembrancer divine,
Let us feel thy power, applying
Christ to every soul and mine.¹²⁹

We have, however, omitted the verse:

Let us feel thine inward groaning,
Look on him we pierced and grieve,
All receive the grace atoning,
All the sprinkled blood receive.

We have also omitted from another well-known hymn on that subject, "Spirit of Faith, come down"¹³⁰ a similar verse:

3. I know my Saviour lives,
He lives, who died for me,
My inmost soul his voice receives
Who hangs on yonder tree:
Set forth before my eyes
Even now I see him bleed,
And hear his mortal groans, and cries,
While suffering in my stead.

The reference here to the groans and cries of Jesus is uncommon, but corresponds to his preaching, for on 15 September 1748 Charles records: "While I described our Lord's passion, the waves subsided, the noise ceased, and they earnestly listened to His last dying cries". Another instance can be found in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*:

1. Come, Holy Ghost, set to thy seal,
Thine inward witness give,
To all our waiting souls reveal
The death by which we live.
2. Spectators of the Pangs Divine
O that we now might be,
Discerning in the Sacred Sign
His Passion on the tree!
3. Give us to hear the dreadful sound
Which told his mortal pain,
Tore up the graves, and shook the ground,
And rent the rocks in twain.
4. Repeat the Saviour's dying cry
In every heart so loud,
That every heart may now reply
This was the Son of God!¹³¹

In a previously unpublished poem on Luke 22:39¹³² ("Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him"), Wesley asks us not only to "view what there for us was done", but to be one with our Lord in spirit:

Let us with our Lord retreat,
To the holy mount repair,

Hallowed by his bloody sweat,
By his agony and prayer,
View what there for us was done,
To the Lamb our spirits join,
Echoing back his deepest groan,
Sharing in the pangs divine!

The death of Christ as a present event

The death of Christ is to be thought of, not as just an event in history, but as occurring even now. In "Then let us go, and take, and eat"¹³³ Wesley writes:

2. The instruments that bruised him so
Were broke and scattered long ago,
The flames extinguished were.
But Jesu's death is ever new,
He whom in ages past they slew,
Doth still as slain appear.
3. The oblation sends as sweet a smell,
Even now it pleases God as well
As when it first was made:
The blood doth now as freely flow,
As when his side received the blow
That showed him newly dead.

The same thought occurs in "O thou eternal Victim slain",¹³⁴ where verse 2 runs:

Thy offering still continues new,
Thy vesture keeps its bloody hue,
Thou standst the ever slaughtered lamb,
Thy priesthood still remains the same,
Thy years, O God, can never fail,
Thy goodness is unchangeable.

This verse recalls the wording of an account by Thomas Taylor:¹³⁵

One Lord's-day evening I retired to my apartment for my usual exercise of reading and prayer. While I was calling upon the Lord, He appeared in a wonderful manner, as with His vesture dipped in blood. I saw Him by the eye of faith, hanging on the cross; and the sight caused such love to flow into my soul, that I believed in that moment, and never since gave up my confidence.¹³⁶

Very similar was the experience of Sarah Ryan:¹³⁷

I saw, with the eye of my mind, Jesus standing as he stood before Thomas, and saying, *Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side.* My soul was melted down before him, and I longed to be joined with this people... The power of God overwhelmed my soul, so that I fell back in my chair, and my eye-sight was taken from me: but in the same moment the Lord Jesus appeared to my inward sight, and I cried out three times, "O the beauty of the lovely Jesus, Behold him in his vesture dipped in blood!"¹³⁸

It is as the crucified Christ that he exercises his ministry of intercession for us:

He lives for us to intercede,
For us he doth this moment plead,
And all who could not see him die
May now with faith's interior eye
Behold him stand as slaughtered there,
And feel the answer to his prayer.¹³⁹

Again, in "Father, let the sinner go"¹⁴⁰ Charles writes:

2. Can thy justice ought reply
To our prevailing plea?
Jesus died thy grace to buy
For all mankind, and me;
Still before thy righteous throne
Stands the Lamb as newly slain;
Canst thou turn away thy Son,
Or let him plead in vain?
3. Still the wounds are open wide,
The blood doth freely flow,
As when first his sacred side
Received the deadly blow:
Still, O God, the blood is warm,
Covered with the blood we are;
Find a place it doth not arm,
And strike the sinner there!

Not surprisingly, the experience of Thomas in John 20:26-29 became a favourite theme for him. We still sing "And cry with joy unspeakable: 'Thou art my Lord, my God!'",¹⁴¹ but the now forgotten "O thou whom fain my soul would love"¹⁴² puts it more graphically:

4. I know him by those prints of love,
His bleeding wounds are open wide;
Through faith I handle him, and prove,
I thrust my hand into his side,
I feel the sprinkling of his blood:
Jesus, thou art my Lord, my God!

The wounds of Christ are precious to him. He insists that:

The marks of thy expiring love
In glory, Lord, thou dost retain.¹⁴³

Better-known, of course, are the lines in "Lo, he comes with clouds descending":

The [now "Those"] dear tokens of his passion
Still his dazzling body bears;
Cause of endless exultation
To his ransomed worshippers;
With what rapture
Gaze we on those glorious scars.¹⁴⁴

Remembrance of his sufferings is particularly appropriate for the Lord's Supper.

This theme of recalling the sufferings of Christ is particularly evident in Wesley's Eucharistic hymns. In this he was following a puritan tradition: Jeremy Dyke's manual for communicants argued that at the Lord's Supper it was a duty "to represent unto

ourselves the bitterness of Christ's passion".¹⁴⁵ I have already referred¹⁴⁶ to the writings of Dr Daniel Brevint, which were adapted by John Wesley for his introduction to *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745). Brevint had written:

These expressions to *follow*, to have *conformity*, and to have *communion*, oblige us all to follow Him, as much as in us lies, through all the parts of His life, and every function of His office. We must be born with Him, die on His cross, be buried in His grave, suffer in His tribulations. *Christ* and Christians must be constantly together: *Where I am*, saith He, *there shall My servant be*. But of all these duties the most necessary is, the bearing His *cross*, and dying with Him in *sacrifice*.

Christ never designed to offer Himself for His people, without His people...

Christians are not crucified in the same manner as Christ was; yet... the saviour thus offering Himself, and the saved so united to Him by faith, so partaking of His sufferings, and so given up to His will, are accounted before God one and the same sacrifice.

Many of the hymns which recall Christ's sufferings are taken from *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. An obvious one is:

Come, thou everlasting Spirit
Bring to every thankful mind
All the Saviour's dying merit,
All his sufferings for mankind.¹⁴⁷

Also familiar to Methodists is:

1. Lamb of God, whose bleeding [now "dying"] love
We now recall to mind,
Send the answer from above,
And let us mercy find;
Think on us, who think on thee;
And every struggling soul release;
O remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace!
2. Let thy blood, by faith applied,
The sinner's pardon seal;
Speak us freely justified,
And all our sickness heal;
By thy passion on the tree,
Let all our griefs and troubles cease;
O remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace!¹⁴⁸

The sufferings of the Son are "presented" to the Father.

Geoffrey Wainwright notes:

The Wesleyan hymns [in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*], especially in the section on "The holy eucharist as it implies a sacrifice" (116-127) repeatedly "show" Christ's sacrifice to the Father and ask him to "behold". Thus hymn 121, verses 2 and 3: "See here! - It on thine altar lies...Father, the grand oblation see..."¹⁴⁹

The point can also be illustrated from *HoLS* 125,¹⁵⁰ "O God of our forefathers, hear":

2. With solemn faith we offer up,
And spread before thy glorious eyes,
That only ground of all our hope,

That precious, bleeding sacrifice,
Which brings thy grace on sinners down,
And perfects all our souls in one.

It is worth adding that this doctrine emerges very strongly in a hymn written by William Bright 128 years later, but which is very reminiscent of Wesley.¹⁵¹

And now, O Father, mindful of the love
That bought us, once for all, on Calvary's tree,
And having with us him that pleads above,
We here present, we here spread forth to thee
That only offering perfect in thine eyes,
The one true, pure, immortal sacrifice.

Significantly, the *Companion to Hymns & Psalms* notes that it echoes the Prayer of Consecration in the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁵²

Wesley is clearly not alone among eighteenth-century hymn writers in seeking to contemplate the cross, for I have already referred to Watts's much more famous hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross". It was also a central theme in evangelical writers, and the Olney Hymns of Newton and Cowper include several examples (all written by Newton). Hymn 78, "Jesus Christ, the Lord's Anointed", contains at verse 6 the lines:

When a guilty sinner sees Him,
While he looks his soul is healed...

Similarly, Hymn 134(4) runs:

Upon the cross I see him bleed,
And by the sight from guilt am freed;
This sight destroys the life of sin,
And quickens heavenly life within.

And in Volume II, Hymn 56 contains the following:

1. Let me dwell on Golgotha,
Weep and love my life away!
While I see him on the tree,
Weep, and bleed, and die for me!

Finally, in Toplady, as in Wesley, emerges the idea that the wounds of Jesus still bleed for us:

9. No, Saviour, no; thy wounds are fresh,
Even now they intercede;
Still, *in effect*, for guilty men
Incessantly they bleed.¹⁵³

Hymns, therefore, are a very valuable medium for enabling the worshipper to meditate on the sufferings of Christ, and this is particularly so where those hymns are intended to be used at the Lord's Supper. A more cerebral approach than Wesley's may find this over-emotional and distasteful, but the meditative approach has returned to favour in recent years under the Ignatian umbrella.

5.4 Christ our Righteousness

Let thy blood, by faith applied,
The sinner's pardon seal;
Speak us freely justified,
And all our sickness heal;
By thy passion on the tree,
Let all our griefs and troubles cease;
O remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace!¹⁵⁴

John Wesley described as his “favourite topic” the text “Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption”; and similarly Charles said that the Church of England would never lift up her head again, “till we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord: the Lord our righteousness: Christ made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Righteousness first and then immediately sanctification.”¹⁵⁵ Both Wesleys had undergone the characteristic evangelical experience of discovering that salvation was not dependent on their own attitude or works, but was a free gift to those who accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Like most of those with a similar experience, they initially saw it as an abrupt transition from darkness into light,¹⁵⁶ and discerned the judgement of God on those who failed to preach the same gospel. Equally, very many of the Anglican clergy were incensed by the tenor of their preaching, and the emotional reactions it produced, as much as by the attempt to preach in their parishes, whether in their pulpits or outside church buildings altogether.

The Wesleys, nevertheless, were faithful sons of the Church of England, and John resisted until the end of his life the pressure for separation. Charles was even more concerned to submit to the Church's discipline. They were anxious to show that the gospel they preached was not a new or heretical one, but that which the Church itself acknowledged. They could point, in the Thirty-Nine Articles, to that on justification:

XI. Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deserving: Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

But in the years which had passed since the Reformation, and particularly since the turn of the century, the well of Protestantism had ceased to be pure and undefiled. There is a

natural and almost irresistible tendency for the Church to stress the place of reason in justifying the faith, and of good works in justifying the Christian. In 1716 a Dr Bisse had claimed that:

Of late years a caution has been dinned into the ears of the clergy that they would do well to let alone the doctrinal and mysterious parts of religion, as nice, useless and oftentimes contentious speculation, and instead thereof to preach to the people only good, plain, practical morality...enforcing such from the reasonableness and nature of things.¹⁵⁷

John said in 1739 that certain clergy:

who dissent from the Church, (though they own it not,)...speak of justification, either as the same thing with sanctification, or as something consequent upon it. I believe justification to be wholly distinct from sanctification, and necessarily antecedent to it.¹⁵⁸

In other words, he was claiming that he was himself preaching the historic doctrine of the Church, and that justification was quite separate from the performance of good works which might characterise sanctification. He laboured hard to convince the authorities that he was right, and on 21 February 1739 he and Charles waited on the Archbishop of Canterbury. Charles's Journal for that date records:

With my brother I waited on the Archbishop. He showed us great affection; spoke mildly of Mr. Whitefield; cautioned us to give no more umbrage than was necessary for our own defence; to forbear exceptionable phrases; to keep to the doctrines of the Church. We told him we expected persecution; would abide by the Church till her Articles and Homilies were repealed. He assured us he knew of no design in the governors of the Church to innovate, and neither should there be any innovation while he lived; avowed justification by faith only; and his joy to see us as often as we pleased.¹⁵⁹

The Wesleys, therefore, preached *justification by faith* and a *sanctification* which followed on it but was in essence to be sharply distinguished. What, then, did these two terms mean? When Conference met, for the first time, in 1744, it addressed itself at once to their meaning, beginning with justification:

Monday June 25th

Q.1 What is it to be justified?

A. To be pardoned and received into God's favour, and into such a state that, if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved.

.....

Q.4 What is faith?

A. ...Justifying faith is a supernatural inward sense, or sight, of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, Christ loved me and gave Himself for me; this is that faith by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same spirit bears witness, Thou art pardoned, thou hast redemption in His blood; and this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.

.....

Q.7 What are the immediate fruits of justifying faith?

A. Peace, joy, love, power over all outward sin, and power to keep down all inward sin.

.....

Q.9 What sins are consistent with justifying faith?

A. No wilful sin. If a believer sins, he thereby forfeits his pardon.

.....

It will be seen that Justification is ascribed to God “reconciling the world unto himself”, and the first step in the process is that the believer becomes convinced that “Christ loved me and gave himself for me”. Justification therefore is a consequence of atonement.

On the following day Conference turned to sanctification, trying hard to dispel the confusion which was evidently arising in the mind of many between justification and sanctification:

- Q.1 What is it to be sanctified?
A. To be renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.
- Q.2 Is faith the condition or the instrument of sanctification, or present salvation?
A. It is both the condition and the instrument of it. When we begin to believe, then salvation begins. And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew.
- Q.3 Is not every believer a new creature?
A. Not in the sense of St Paul, 2 Cor v. 17. All old things are passed away in him who is a new creature, and all things become new.
- Q.4 But has every believer a new heart?
A. A great change is wrought in the heart or affections of every one as soon as he believes; yet he is still full of sin, so that he has not then a new heart in the full sense.
- Q.5 Is not every believer born of God, a temple of the Holy Ghost?
A. In a low sense he is; but he that is, in the proper sense, born of God, cannot commit sin.

Notice that there is no attempt to impose a “two-stage” experience on the believer, such as is seen in modern Pentecostalism, where “baptism in the Spirit” is a distinct stage and experience from conversion. For Wesley, the seeds of sanctification are implicit in conversion, but it is something to which the believer must progress. There may be an *experience* of sanctification, but on the other hand there may not: Wesley certainly did not believe that sanctification must invariably be evidenced by an identifiable experience, though he encouraged his followers to “go on towards perfection”, and he valued accounts of having received it instantaneously.¹⁶⁰

Justification, then, always precedes sanctification, but a *partial* sanctification follows on it, so that the believer acquires holiness throughout the remainder of his or her life (and, if one accepts John’s doctrine, may have an accelerated sanctification through an experience). Charles put his own belief thus:

When I use the proffered power,
And to the Fountain fly,
Thou wilt in that self-same hour
Forgive, and sanctify;
Partly sanctify me then;
And if I at thy cross abide,
Wash my inmost nature clean,
And take me to thy side.¹⁶¹

The Wesleys did, of course, take seriously the Pauline doctrine, so important to the Reformers, that we are justified by faith. Two particular areas of dispute here were *the nature of the faith which saves us*, and *whether the righteousness we acquire through faith is imputed or imparted*.

First, then: What is the nature of the faith which saves us? Let us look again at that Conference Minute of 1744:

- A. ...Justifying faith is a supernatural inward sense, or sight, of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, Christ loved me and gave Himself for me; this is that faith by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same spirit bears witness, Thou art pardoned, thou hast redemption in His blood; and this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.

Two things are described as happening here: first, a conviction by the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ loved me and gave himself for me; and secondly, an assurance of pardon. These are amply vouched for in early Methodist experience, but they cannot happen unless by an act of the will I allow them to happen. The Arminian belief that all may choose to be saved has as its corollary that all may choose not to be. True it is that people who had gone to scoff at Methodist preachers had ended up weeping for their sins and praising God with unspeakable joy, but they were not mere automatons: the determined sinner will remain a sinner.

What then happens when I hear the gospel and want to respond to it? Am I justified when I am convinced in my mind that Christ died for me and that he can save me? Or must I await the witness of the Holy Spirit and an assurance of pardon which follows on that? Bernard G Holland, in an article in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, has shown that there was no coherent answer in Methodism, and in particular that Charles differed from John in this respect. John distinguished three different kinds of faith in this context: first, suppliant faith, the effort to keep God's law and a pleading for a greater faith; second, justifying faith, the assurance that Christ died for me; and third, saving faith, the assurance of God's pardon. The first of these was regarded principally as a forerunner to the other two: he who exercised it was still under wrath. Justification followed the second, from which the third would normally follow immediately.¹⁶²

Charles, on the other hand, saw justification as consequent on suppliant faith. We are saved by faith, and that includes suppliant faith. Charles believed that the act of

supplication is met by God's saving response. Thus suppliant faith and justifying faith are telescoped into a single category. Holland summarises by saying that for John, "self-surrender was not in itself justifying faith properly so-called, while for Charles it was". Melville Horne,¹⁶³ who on many occasions heard the Wesleys preach, says that Charles:

far from denouncing wrath on *sincere* Penitents...comforted them by insinuating that were in a *salvable* state. He told them that they had the faith of God's *Servants*, though they were not yet sealed, as his sons, by the loving Spirit of Adoption... To the best of my recollection, Mr J.Wesley did not admit this *distinction* into his pulpit.¹⁶⁴

Holland reckoned that of 36 preachers who had described their conversion at John's request, 14 had had an experience which demonstrated the three categories above, but the remainder demonstrated only Charles's two categories¹⁶⁵. He sees as an example of the three-category approach John Nelson,¹⁶⁶ who seems to have come before God with the faith of a servant, but no conviction that Christ died for him, until he obtained the assurance he now describes:

I kneeled before the Lord some time, and saw myself a criminal before the Judge: then I said, "Lord, thy will be done; damn or save!" That moment Jesus Christ was as evidently set before the eye of my mind, as crucified for my sins, as if I had seen him with my bodily eyes; and in that instant my heart was set at liberty from guilt and tormenting fear, and filled with a calm and serene peace. I could then say, without any dread or fear, "Thou art my Lord and my God".¹⁶⁷

As an example of the two-category approach, Holland takes Thomas Rankin,¹⁶⁸ who appears to have had suppliant faith, and the certainty of an interest in Christ's death, but no assurance of pardon:

One morning...I began to wrestle with God in an agony of prayer. I called out, "Lord, I have wrestled long, and have not yet prevailed; Oh, let me now prevail!" The whole passage of Jacob's wrestling with the Angel came into my mind; and I called aloud, "I will not let Thee go, unless Thou bless me!" In a moment the cloud burst, and tears of love flowed from my eyes; when the words were applied to my soul, many times over, "And he blessed him there". They came with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance; and my whole soul was overwhelmed with the presence of God. Every doubt of my assurance was now gone.¹⁶⁹

John appears at first to have escaped from what would otherwise have appeared a harsh stance, without actually abandoning his three stages of faith, by concluding that justifying faith would always and inevitably follow suppliant faith. In Conference Minutes of 1746 appear the following Question and Answer:

- Q. But can it be conceived that God has any regard to the sincerity of an unbeliever?
A. Yes, so much, that, if he perseveres therein, God will infallibly give him faith.

In the following year, John dealt with this in more detail. He stated that whilst people who are "continually hurrying, striving, praying for the assurance [of faith] which they have not", *are* still "under the wrath and under the curse of God", they will not be allowed

to die in that state. "If they continue to seek, they will surely find righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost".¹⁷⁰ Finally, twenty years later, on 1 December 1767, he came to the conclusion that "he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted [with God]".¹⁷¹

To Charles, then, justification takes place as soon as the sinner turns to God. One of his six published sermons takes as its subject the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in St Luke 18:9-14. He says (though he is reading into the parable Pauline theology):

As he [the publican] spoke these words he received the atonement. He looked up to Him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. He believed in Him who justifies the ungodly, as the friend of sinners Himself testifies, (I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other). Justified, that is forgiven and counted righteous.¹⁷²

Even that, however, is not a "work", but evidence of the divine grace (which can still, of course, be resisted):

1. Author of faith, to thee I cry,
To thee, who wouldst not have me die,
But know the truth and live;
Open my eyes to see thy face,
Work in my heart the saving grace,
The life eternal give.
2. Shut up in unbelief I groan,
And blindly serve a God unknown,
Till thou the veil remove;
The gift unspeakable impart,
And write thy name upon my heart,
And manifest thy love.
3. I know the work is only thine,
The gift of faith is all divine;
But, if on thee we call,
Thou wilt the benefit bestow,
And give us hearts to feel and know
That thou hast died for all.
4. Thou bid'st us knock and enter in,
Come unto thee, and rest from sin,
The blessing seek and find;
Thou bid'st us ask thy grace, and have;
Thou canst, thou wouldst, this moment save,
Both me and all mankind.
5. Be it according to thy word!
Now let me find my pardoning Lord,
Let what I ask be given;
The bar of unbelief remove,
Open the door of faith and love,
And take me into heaven.¹⁷³

More familiar to many is this next hymn, in which the two-stage sequence of repentance and forgiveness is pursued through the verses:

1. Come, O thou all-victorious Lord,
Thy power to us make known;
Strike with the hammer of thy word,
And break these hearts of stone.
2. Give us ourselves and thee to know
On this our gracious day;
Repentance unto life bestow,
And take our sins away.
3. Conclude us first in unbelief
And freely then release;
Fill every soul with sacred grief
And then with sacred peace.
4. Impoverish, Lord, and then relieve,
And then enrich the poor;
The knowledge of our sickness give,
The knowledge of our cure.
5. That blessed sense of guilt impart,
And then remove the load;
Trouble, and wash the troubled heart
In the atoning blood.
6. Our desperate state through sin declare,
And speak our sins forgiven;
By perfect holiness prepare,
And take us up to heaven.¹⁷⁴

Repentance is followed by “sacred peace” (verse 3): there is no third stage of waiting for assurance. Indeed, it is impossible that I should still be “under the wrath and curse of God” once I have turned to Christ, because he has died for me:

1. Arise, my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fear;
The bleeding sacrifice
In my behalf appears;
Before the throne my surety stands;
My name is written on his hands.
2. He ever lives above,
For me to intercede,
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood, to plead;
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.
3. Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me;
“Forgive him, O forgive!” they cry,
“Nor let that ransomed sinner die!”
4. The Father hears him pray,
His dear anointed one;
He cannot turn away
The presence of his Son:
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

5. He owns me for his child,
His pardoning voice I hear;
In Jesus reconciled
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And "Father, Abba, Father!" cry.

Of course, that imagery is open to the objection that it portrays the Father as having to be persuaded to forgive. But on another level it states the absolute certainty of forgiveness, because Christ loves me; and it states too the certainty of assurance, because "the Spirit answers to the blood/ And tells me I am born of God".

What would Charles have said to the question, "What if there is no assurance?" We have to remember that he is a poet, rather than a dogmatic theologian, and his hymns have to be treated accordingly. However, he would surely have said that the sinner is justified notwithstanding a lack of assurance, and that (as we have noted with deathbed scenes - page 12), the enemy would do his best to destroy faith.

Both Wesleys distinguished between the faith of a servant and the faith of a son. For John, however, the faith of a servant, which always lacked assurance, was insufficient for salvation; for Charles, on the other hand, such a faith, as long as it cast itself fully upon Christ, would be rewarded by transformation into the faith of a son.

Supreme, incarnate Deity,
Display thy sovereign power in me,
Stone into flesh thou canst convert,
A slave's into a filial heart:
Speak: and begotten by thy word,
I magnify my quickening Lord,
Though dead in sin, I rise forgiven,
A child of grace, an heir of heaven.¹⁷⁵

The second area of dispute was whether the righteousness we acquire through faith is imputed or imparted. Key passages here are Romans 4:6:

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. (KJV)

Romans 5:1:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)

and Galatians 3:6:

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. (KJV)

The word "imputeth" in the first passage may also be rendered "reckoneth" (RV), "credits" (NIV), "attributes" (NJB), "reckons" (RSV), and "counts" (REB). Similarly in the second passage, "accounted" may also be rendered "imputed" (KJV margin), "reckoned unto" (RV), "credited" (NIV), "reckoned" (NJB and RSV), or "counted" (REB).

It is clear that Paul is arguing that no righteousness is to be found in works, for we have all sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God; and any righteousness we are to acquire will be through faith. These passages, however, can be used to argue two positions which on the surface appear close together but which in reality produce considerable theological discord. The first position is that faith itself is treated by God as righteousness (i.e., there is a *righteousness of relationship* to God in Christ). Thus the man or woman of faith is *actually* righteous (though not, of course, by works). The second position is that faith enables God to *treat* the sinner as righteous. In this case, however, the man or woman of faith is *not* righteous.

Those who argue for the first position will say that it avoids an artificiality implicit in the second. Dr Vincent Taylor put the argument well when he wrote: "Righteousness can no more be imputed to a sinner than bravery to a coward or wisdom to a fool".¹⁷⁶ Those who argue for the second will say that the first is reverting to salvation by works, because the sinner will treat his faith as a "work" meriting salvation.¹⁷⁷

If the second position is correct, the righteousness of the sinner will be an *imputed* righteousness. The sinner is not righteous in fact, but is reckoned so by God. Martin Luther can be cited in support of this approach (though perhaps incorrectly, as we shall see below):

Now the saints are always aware of their sin and seek righteousness from God in accordance with his mercy. And for this very reason, they are regarded as righteous by God. Thus in their own eyes (and in reality!) they are sinners - but in the eyes of God they are righteous, because he reckons them as such on account of their confession of their sin. In reality they are sinners, but they are righteous by the imputation of a merciful God. They are unknowingly righteous, and knowingly sinners. They are sinners in fact, but righteous in hope.¹⁷⁸

And Joanna and Alister McGrath, who quote this in their recent book "The Dilemma of Self-Esteem", write:

Through faith, the believer is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, in much the same way, Luther suggests, as Ezekiel speaks of God covering our nakedness with His garment.¹⁷⁹

The McGraths cite with approval a Latin phrase of Philipp Melanchthon, that we are justified *propter Christum per fidem*: on account of Christ, through faith; but this adds something of a gloss to Paul's words in Roman 5:1.

On the other hand, Dorothee Sölle¹⁸⁰ has argued that Luther has often been misrepresented on this point, by Melanchthon among others. His doctrine of imputation simply "safeguards the truth that man never has 'righteousness' in the sense of some objectifiable possession which once acquired becomes inalienable... God regards the person not in terms of substance but in terms of relationship". This interpretation is shared by Dr Gordon Rupp:

We shall let Luther speak for himself, for it is only too easy to read back into Luther later categories of Protestant theology. There is certainly nothing here of the elaborate Protestant doctrine of a scheme of imputed merits. Luther simply expounds Romans 4:7, where he meets the Biblical phrases, in the Latin - "reputare ad justitiam," and the quotation from Psalm 32, "Beatus vir cui non imputabit Dominus peccatum" - "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin". Luther includes at this point a full exposition of this section of Psalm 32, and it is when we compare what he has to say here with what he said in his Lectures on the Psalms at this point, that we grasp the movement and dimension of his thought. Luther's thought is no more concerned with the forensic associations of these phrases than is St Paul...

The just man, then, is the man "to whom the Lord does not impute sin".¹⁸¹

In other words, it is sin which is not imputed, rather than righteousness which is. "The sin of the saints is covered and not imputed on account of Christ".¹⁸² Rupp goes on:

Karl Holl, in a fine and justly famous essay, showed that Luther's teaching in his "Romans" is not to be conceived along the lines of Melanchthonian orthodoxy, in terms of an exceedingly forensic notion of Justification and "imputation". He...drew...the conclusion that for Luther justification involved not merely a "declaring righteous" but also "making righteous".¹⁸³

This "declaring righteous" has a particular significance in Luther, because (as we have seen) it does not imply a forensic approach. It is not that God finds the basis for forgiveness in bringing man within the rules, so to speak, but rather that God's declaration is itself just, and the basis for justifying man. As Dorothee Sölle puts it:

God's imputation...is the creative word which calls into being that which does not exist; it presents to the unjust man to whom it imputes righteousness the possibility of being righteous and does so by the very act of declaring him righteous.¹⁸⁴

A similar concept can be seen in Karl Barth: "I will be your God' is the justification of man; 'You shall be my people' is his sanctification".

Among the Wesleys' contemporaries, both the English Calvinists and the Moravians argued strongly for a righteousness which was solely imputed, and solely that of Christ. "Nothing in my hand I bring", insists Toplady, in his familiar hymn "Rock of Ages":

3. Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Less well known, but more explicit theologically, are his lines:

1. Jesus, thou tried Foundation Stone
From whose prevailing blood alone
Thy saints expect salvation,
My robe thou art, I feel thy grace,
And triumph in thy righteousness
Made mine by imputation.

Count Zinzendorf,¹⁸⁵ for his part, claimed that “a believer is never sanctified or holy in himself, but in Christ, only; he has no holiness in himself at all”. To John Wesley, this was patently untrue:

What a heap of palpable self-contradiction, what senseless jargon is this! Does a believer love God, or does he not? If he does, he has the love of God in him... You cannot therefore deny, that every believer has holiness in, though not from, himself; else you deny, that he is holy at all; and if so, he cannot see the Lord.¹⁸⁶

The same impatience is evident in John’s remark that, while no-one had spoken more ably than Luther on justification, on sanctification he had exhibited “total ignorance”.¹⁸⁷

Both Wesleys seem nevertheless to have been initially disposed to follow the doctrine that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. In 1740 John translated most of a hymn by Zinzendorf entitled *Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit*, and five verses of this remain in *Hymns & Psalms* as no. 225:

1. Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

In another translation by John in the same year, “Now I have found the ground within”, written by J A Rothe (*Hymns & Psalms* 684), verse 3 contains the lines

Covered is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me.

Charles himself, in his Journal for 17 August 1738, writes:

...Met Mrs Brockmar - one who in despair had been directed to Christ, and in a fortnight found peace to her soul, steadfastly believing her sin had been imputed to Christ, and His righteousness to her.¹⁸⁸

Similarly, in one of his few published sermons, he says,

He only comprehends and lives it [everlasting life, the life hid with Christ in God] who hath Christ's righteousness imputed to him.¹⁸⁹

The "covering" metaphor commended itself to him: we are "clothed in righteousness divine", as one of his very first hymns¹⁹⁰ puts it; or, to quote a rather less well-known one, "O what shall I do, my Saviour to praise" (*Hymns & Psalms* 569, first published in 1742):

3. Their daily delight shall be in thy name;
They shall as their right thy righteousness claim;
Thy righteousness wearing, and cleansed by thy blood,
Bold shall they appear in the presence of God.

Even up to the end of his life he used the "covering" metaphor. In "Father, thy beloved Son"¹⁹¹ he writes:

6. Father thy heavenly voice I own,
Propitious through thy favourite Son,
I know thou art to me;
Clothed with his blood and righteousness,
Accepted in his work I bless
Thy gracious majesty.

The Wesleys saw, however, that the idea of an imputed righteousness was insufficient in itself. It was likely to discourage the cultivation of a true righteousness - *imparted*, rather than *imputed* - which followed on from justification. They were soon teaching, therefore, that faith was itself imputed to the believer for righteousness. John taught that righteousness was "imputed to everyone who believes, as soon as he believes", but also *implanted* "in every one to whom he has *imputed* it."¹⁹² This imputed righteousness, moreover, should not be understood as the righteousness of Christ (whether of his works or not). Conference Minutes of 25 June 1744 record:

- Q.16 In what sense is the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, or to all mankind?
A. We do not find it affirmed expressly in Scripture, that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to any; although we do find that faith is imputed unto us for righteousness.¹⁹³

In his Sermon V, "Justification by Faith", John considered what was meant by justification. He evidently did not think that it entailed having the righteousness of Christ attributed to us:

4. Least of all does justification imply, that God is deceived in those whom he justifies; that he thinks them to be what, in fact, they are not; that he accounts them to be otherwise than they are. It does by no means imply, that God judges concerning us contrary to the real nature of things; that he esteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous when we are unrighteous... Neither can it ever consist with his unerring wisdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, because another is so. He can no more, in this manner,

confound me with Christ, than with David or Abraham...

5. The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he "showeth forth his righteousness" (or mercy) "by the remission of the sins that are past"... To him that is justified or forgiven, God "will not impute sin" to his condemnation...

As we have just seen, John found the concept that we should aim to have no more than the imputed righteousness of Christ unattractive and, indeed, contradictory. In "Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ"¹⁹⁴ he wrote:

11...The expression "the imputing the righteousness of Christ;" ...I dare not insist on, neither require any one to use, because I cannot find it in the Bible. If any one can, he has better eyes than me; and I wish he would show me where it is...

14. And doth not this way of speaking naturally tend to make Christ the minister of sin? For if the very personal obedience of Christ...be mine the moment I believe, can anything be added thereto? Does my obeying God add any value to the perfect obedience of Christ? On this scheme, then, are not the holy and the unholy on the very same footing?

What, then, is the nature of this faith which causes God to justify us?

IV. 2. Justifying faith implies, not only a divine evidence or conviction that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.¹⁹⁵

John must, therefore, have seen his May 1738 experience as revealing the nature of the faith which the Christian needed in order to be justified.

John was very careful not to see faith itself as a work. In August 1739 he had his celebrated interview with Bishop Butler, and the following conversation ensued:

Bishop Butler: Sir, our faith itself is a good work; it is a virtuous temper of mind. **Wesley:** My Lord, whatever faith is, our Church asserts we are justified by faith alone. But how it can be a good work, I see not. It is the gift of God, and a gift that presupposes nothing in us but sin and misery. **Butler:** How, sir! Then you make God a tyrannical Being if He justifies some without any goodness in them preceding, and does not justify all. If these are not justified on account of some moral goodness in them, why are not these justified too? **Wesley:** Because, my lord, they "*resist His spirit*", because they will not come to Him that they might have life... They cannot be saved, because they will not believe.¹⁹⁶

It seems very likely, in fact, that the doctrine Wesley was putting forward here was the same as that which Dorothee Sölle attributes to Luther, namely that righteousness by faith is a righteousness of relationship, that it is a real and not an artificial righteousness, but equally that it is a gift from God for which we can take no credit.

The question of imputation seems, however, to have presented continuing difficulties. On 9 October 1777 John records:

I was desired by some of our friends to clear up the point of imputed righteousness. I did so, by preaching on, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." In opening these words, I showed what that faith was, which was imputed to him for righteousness, - viz, faith in God's promise to give him the land of Canaan; faith in the promise that Sarah should conceive a

son; and the faith whereby he offered up Isaac on the altar. But Christ is not in any of these instances the direct or immediate object of Abraham's faith; whereas he is the direct, immediate object of that faith, which is imputed to us for righteousness.¹⁹⁷

In other words, it was faith, and for Christians faith in Christ, which God reckoned as righteousness to us.

Charles, as we have seen, taught the imputation of Christ's righteousness but, like his brother, veered away from the concept that this was the *only* righteousness we could expect. In one of his sermons, he subordinates imputed righteousness to imparted righteousness:

If Christ be given for us, He is likewise given to us; He is formed in our hearts by faith, and lives and reigns in our souls. If Christ is made unto me righteousness, He is, He must be, made unto me sanctification also. His righteousness is not imputed to me unless I manifest it by righteousness inherent in me. Whom he justifies, he also sanctifies.¹⁹⁸

In one of his hymns, he asks: "But canst thou account me just, And never make me so?"¹⁹⁹ Where, then, he refers to imputation, it is likely to be coupled with a reference to *imparted* righteousness. In "O Saviour, whose blood",²⁰⁰ he writes:

2. My goodness thou art,
Impute and impart
Thy virtue to quiet,
And hallow my heart.

He refers too, to "the righteousness of faith", implying that whatever righteousness we have is one of relationship:

But the righteousness of faith
Hath taught me better things.²⁰¹

There may, additionally, be a glimpse of the concept of justification by divine fiat which we noted in Luther. The hymn "Lamb of God, whose dying (originally "bleeding") love"²⁰² included (until omitted by *Hymns & Psalms* 550) the words "Speak us freely justified", and it may well be that Charles saw God as uttering the decree of justification as sheer grace, just as he willed not to impute sin to the believer.

Charles certainly feared that there could be a temptation to rely entirely on imputed righteousness. In "Shepherd Divine, at whose command"²⁰³ he imagines his opponents contenting themselves with a wholly fictitious righteousness:

6. Lulled in imaginary peace,
Rich in a fancied faith they reign,
And fold their arms, and take their ease,
And settled on their lees again
All inward holiness disclaim,
Since Christ was meek, and chaste *for* them.

7. Thy righteousness to cloak their sin
They claim with lips and hearts impure,
Unchanged, unhallowed, and unclean,
They fancy their salvation sure,
Wrapped up in fleshly liberty,
Happy in sin, but not in thee.

The Wesleys also had to contend against the doctrine that saving faith was not to be sought (as they themselves had done) through prayer, Bible-reading and the sacraments, but simply by waiting upon God and “being still”. “Stillness” is particularly associated with the Fetter Lane society and the Moravian preacher Molther,²⁰⁴ and may well have proceeded from a misunderstanding of Martin Luther. Luther had written:

Why, then, do we do nothing? Do we work nothing for the obtaining of this righteousness? I answer: Nothing at all. For the nature of this righteousness is, to do nothing, to hear nothing, to know nothing whatsoever of the law or of works, but to know and to believe this only, that Christ is gone to the Father and is not now seen; that he sitteth in heaven at the right hand of his Father, not as a judge, but made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption: briefly, that he is our high-priest intreating for us, and reigning over us and in us by grace. Here no sin is perceived, no terror or remorse of conscience is felt; for in this heavenly righteousness sin can have no place: for there is no law, and where no law is, there can be no transgression (Rom iv 15).²⁰⁵

Luther elsewhere makes it plain that he is not disparaging good works:

When I have this righteousness reigning in my heart, I descend from heaven as the rain making fruitful the earth: that is to say, I come forth into another kingdom, and do good works, how and whensoever occasion is offered.²⁰⁶

But his emphasis is on doing nothing until we obtain this righteousness from above, and those who took him literally were not unnaturally inclined to assume that the means of grace were thereby excluded. John, who was as strongly disposed towards the means of grace as ever he had been at Oxford, predictably dissented. After a meeting with Molther on 31 December 1739, John drew up a list of the differences between them, and castigated Molther for his inclination:

to wait for Christ, and be still, i.e.
Not to use (what we term) the means of grace;
Not to go to Church;
Not to communicate;
Not to fast;
Not to use so much private prayer;
Not to read the Scripture...²⁰⁷

John agreed that one must “wait for Christ, and be still”, but only “by using all the means of grace”, namely going to church, communicating, fasting, using as much private prayer as possible, reading the scriptures, and doing both temporal and (as far as one could) spiritual good.²⁰⁸

Controversy ensued with the Fetter Lane society, many of whom laboured to prove “That my brother and I laid too much stress upon the ordinances”.²⁰⁹ Eventually,

convinced that further argument was useless, John “gave them up to God”. However, further outbreaks of the “stillness” approach occurred in subsequent years.²¹⁰

Charles himself had had a brief flirtation with the stillness doctrine. According to Thomas Jackson,²¹¹ he was “engaged in the public delivery of expository discourses on the 1st Epistle of St John...when he suddenly desisted, and expressed his intention to proceed no further in that service. He did this under an influence foreign from himself”. Jackson traces the influence to Peter Böhler,²¹² Gambold,²¹³ and Westley Hall²¹⁴. The Countess of Huntingdon²¹⁵ “remonstrated very freely” with him and “rescued him from the fascination of ‘stillness’”. On 22 June 1740 Charles writes, “How ought I to rejoice at my deliverance out of their [the Moravians’] hands and spirit! My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler”.²¹⁶

Charles’s hymns and poems are, as we have seen, often polemical, especially against Calvinism. It would be surprising if they were not also directed against the Stillness doctrine. A hymn written in 1739 was for long sung simply as a commentary on his “conversion”, but in its original form it is also a commentary on the means by which he attained to saving faith. The hymn begins:

1. Long have I seemed to serve thee, Lord,
With unavailing pain,
Fasted, and prayed and read thy word,
And heard it preached in vain.
2. Oft did I with the assembly join,
And near thine altar drew;
A form of godliness was mine,
The power I never knew.
3. I rested in the outward law,
Nor knew its deep design;
The length and breadth I never saw,
The height of love Divine.
4. To please thee thus (at last I see)
In vain I hoped and strove:
For what are outward things to thee,
Unless they spring from love?
5. I see the perfect law requires
Truth in the inward parts,
Our full consent, our whole desires,
Our undivided hearts.
6. But I of *means* have made my boast,
Of *means* an idol made;
The spirit in the letter lost,
The substance in the shade.
7. Where am I now, or what my hope?
What can my weakness do?

Jesus, to thee my soul looks up,
'Tis thou must make it new.

This is how it was printed in Wesley's Hymns (1877), though in its original form the order was 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 3, 7. But then Wesley had written sixteen other verses (of which ten appear below), to drive home the point that God was to be found in following his commands, not in disregarding them. Only when that duty had been done could one "be still":

8. Thine is the work, and thine alone -
But shall I idly stand?
Shall I the written Rule disown,
And slight my God's command?
9. Wildly from thine shall I turn back,
A better path to find;
Thy holy ordinance forsake,
And cast thy words behind?
10. Forbid it, gracious Lord, that I
Should ever learn thee so!
No - let *me* with thy word comply,
If I thy love would know.
11. Suffice, for me, that thou, my Lord,
Hast bid me fast and pray:
Thy will be done, thy name adored;
'Tis only mine to obey.
12. Thou bidst me search the sacred leaves,
And taste the hallowed bread:
The kind commands my soul receives,
And longs on thee to feed.
13. Still for thy loving kindness, Lord,
I in thy temple wait;
I look to find thee in thy word,
Or at thy table meet.
14. Here, *in thine own appointed ways*,
I wait to learn thy will:
Silent I stand before thy face,
And hear thee say, "Be still!"
15. "Be still - and know that I am God!"
'Tis all I live to know;
To feel the virtue of thy blood,
And spread its praise below.
16. I wait my vigour to renew,
Thine image to retrieve,
The veil of outward things pass through,
And gasp in thee to live.
17. I work, and own the labour vain;
And *thus* from works I cease:
I strive, and see my fruitless pain,
Till God create my peace.

More succinctly, Charles wrote in "Ah! Lord, regard my endless woe" (a hymn "For the Tempted"): ²¹⁷

6. How many to the angelic foe
Have weakly fallen an easy prey,
And let their holy calling go,
And wandered down a smoother way,
Charmed by his *Antinomian* love,
To watch, and pray, and strive no more!

It is interesting that Charles himself had almost come under the influence of antinomianism:

I was once on the brink of antinomianism, by unwarily reading Crisp and Saltmarsh. Just then warm in my first love, I was in the utmost danger when Providence threw in my way Boulter's treatise, entitled, *An Hundred Errors of Dr Crisp demonstrated*.²¹⁸

Crisp had written, "There is no sin that ever believers commit that can possibly do them hurt".

We can sum up this section by saying that the atonement is, for Charles Wesley, a "package" to be received by faith. Indeed, he speaks often of sinners "receiving" the atonement, referring no doubt to the words of St Paul in Romans 5:11: "...our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement". By this, he means that it had an immediate and perceptible effect on their lives: an assurance of sins forgiven, an assurance similarly of being accepted by God, and the knowledge of being cleansed and set on the road to holiness. On Friday May 19th 1738 – two days before he received peace in his soul – he writes that he has no doubt of Mrs Turner's having "received the atonement".²¹⁹ On 10 July 1738 he notes that one Margaret Beutinman *received* the atonement, and professed her faith without wavering; her love to Christ, and willingness to die that moment.²²⁰ Similarly on 16 November 1738 he writes:

Then Mrs Wren confessed she had been in bondage ten years, but received the atonement on Tuesday night, while we were praying: was now perfectly free: full of peace, and joy in believing.

When he preaches a sermon before the University of Oxford on 1 July 1739, he notes:

What the faith is, through which we thus receive the atonement and apply Christ and all His merits to our soul in particular, was the third thing I proposed discoursing upon.²²¹

Again he uses this term "receive", and it seems to have been much more congenial to him than to his brother. The only use of it in John's Journal is, as far as I can see, in a quotation on 5 December 1738, when a woman writes to him of her sister having "received the atonement on St Peter's day".²²²

Charles uses the term "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor 9:15) in much the same way, as if it were synonymous with "atonement":

I used a prayer for her [a "poor woman"], that God, who hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, would now impart to her his unspeakable gift. In the midst of the prayer she received it.²²³

I have found no references to thus "receiving" the atonement in his hymns (though "Holy Lamb, who thee receive",²²⁴ one of John's translations from the German, contains in verse 5 the words "He the atonement now receives").

What is this "package" which we receive through the cross of Christ? Certainly it is being pardoned, being freed from condemnation and the wrath of God. Certainly it is the bestowal of righteousness, and not merely a technical or fictitious one,²²⁵ but an actual righteousness. Indeed, it is holiness, the state of having the mind of Christ. His brother John had written of holiness as being not an outward quality but an inward one, namely

The love of God and our neighbour: the image of God stamped on the heart; the life of God in the soul of man; a participation of the divine nature; the mind that was in Christ; enabling us to walk as Christ also walked.²²⁶

In the same way, Charles writes of the grace of God towards those who accept the atonement:

Thy mighty name salvation is;
And keeps my happy soul above;
Comfort it brings, and power, and peace,
And joy, and everlasting love:
To me, with thy dear name, are given
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.²²⁷

And similarly:

Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free;
The mind which was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to thee.²²⁸

Justification, therefore, was an area in which Charles and John were in agreement, apart from Charles's simpler and more charitable approach to what constituted "saving faith". Both brothers were concerned to steer clear of salvation by works, on the one hand, and salvation by election (with its inevitable corollary of reprobation) on the other. Both were suspicious of the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and insisted that there must be a real or imparted righteousness which followed on from justification. So strong was this insistence that it gave birth to the hotly-disputed doctrine of Christian Perfection. Here, the brothers were not in harmony; but since Charles saw Perfection as closely linked to the atonement, we need to consider it in detail in the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter 5

- 1 H&P 47 (H&SP 1742).
- 2 J H Blunt, quoted in SOED, "Depravity".
- 3 Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, OUP 1943, p 345.
- 4 Alister McGrath, in *Iustitia Dei II* (Cambridge University Press 1986) , p 48, points out that Calvin, in his discussion of the Tridentine decree on justification, raised no objection to the explicit statement that Christ died for all men. It was Beza who stated that Christ died only for the elect. Alan C Clifford rejects limited atonement as one of Calvin's tenets, and quotes a "typical" statement in *Journal*, vii, 340: "God commends to us the salvation of all men without exception, even as Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world". (*Atonement and Justification*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, p 73).
- 5 See Alan C Clifford, *Atonement and Justification*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, p 58.
- 6 Quoted by Howard Snyder, *The Radical Wesley*, Inter-Varsity Press Illinois 1980, p 145.
- 7 It may be noted as a matter of church tradition that the Council of Orange (529), which embraced a form of Augustinianism, condemned Reprobation explicitly: "We not only do not believe that any are predestined to evil by the power of God, but we even state with utter abhorrence that if there are those who want to believe so evil a thing, they are anathema".
- 8 John Wesley, *Works*, Vol 10, p 383.
- 9 See *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, by Randy L Maddox, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1994, p 57.
- 10 Edward Houghton , *The Handmaid of Piety* (Wesley Fellowship, 1992) pp 86-87).
- 11 H&P 460 (RH 1747).
- 12 PW Volume 3 p 46 (HoGEL 1741).
- 13 H&SP 1740
- 14 Wesley, *Works*, Volume 8, p 336.
- 15 Sermon 128.
- 16 John Wesley's *Sermons*, (*Works*, Outler Edition, Vol 3:556).
- 17 These are the four decrees of *The Declaration of Sentiments* (1608), by Jacob Arminius.
- 18 John Wesley, *Works*, Vol 10 pp 259-265, *Dialogue Between a Predestinarian and his Friend*; the reference is to *Institutes* b3, c 23, sec 1.
- 19 John Wesley's *Journal*, 14 May 1765 (Standard Edition, Vol 5:116).
- 20 *The Arminian Magazine*, Vol. 2 (1779), p 283.
- 21 Hebrews 2:9, "That he [Jesus] by the grace of God should taste death for every man".
- 22 1 Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive".
- 23 Isaiah 55:1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters".
- 24 Philippians 2:10-11.
- 25 The decree of God by which some were elected and other reprobated or damned; see note 37 below.
- 26 John R Tyson, *Charles Wesley: A Reader*, OUP 1989, p 37 .
- 27 *Ib*, p 38.
- 28 H&P 185(4) (HoGEL 1741).
- 29 Bernard Lord Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, Epworth Press, London, 1942, p 18.
- 30 H&P 520 (HoGEL 1741). (For the possibility that John may have written this hymn, see Appendix C). The italics are in the original.
- 31 PW Volume 2, p 301 (H&SP 1742).
- 32 PW Volume 11 page 325 no. 1625 (SH 1762) .
- 33 PW, Volume 2, p 344, "Jesu, thy wandering sheep behold" (H&SP 1742).
- 34 PW Volume 3, page 29 (HoGEL 1741).
- 35 PW Volume 3, page 59, "Jesus my Hope, my Help, my Power" (HoGEL 1741) .
- 36 PW Volume 3, page 66, "Holy, and just, and gracious God" (HoGEL 1741).

- 37 Charles had referred to the "horrid doctrine and decree of reprobation" in his sermon on Justification by Faith, first preached on 21 January 1739. See *Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the first time transcribed from the original* by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge (WHS Occasional Publication 1987), p 46. The phrase originally seems to come from Calvin himself, who wrote *decretum quidem horribile fateor*. *Horribile* means "dread" rather than "horrid": it has been translated variously as "dreadful" (Beveridge, 1845), "awful" (Allen, 1813) and "terrible" (Norton, 1582). "The decree is dreadful indeed, I confess". See *The Handmaid of Piety* by Edward Houghton (Wesley Fellowship, 1992, pp 76-77), and the Introduction to *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, Volume 2, p xviii.
- 38 John R Tyson, *Charles Wesley: A Reader*, OUP 1989, p 304.
- 39 Hymns & Sacred Poems I, 174(3) (first published 1742).
- 40 *The Arminian Magazine* Volume I (1778) pp 333-336; *PW* Volume 3, p 74ff (*HoGEL* 1742).
- 41 J E Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, Epworth Press, London, 1941, p 121.
- 42 See Chapter 2.1, note 29.
- 43 Toplady, *Occasional Hymns* XXVI (6).
- 44 *Journal*, 24 May 1738 (Standard Edition, Vol 1:472)
- 45 Quoted by Thomas F Lockyer in *PWHS*, Volume 8 (1911-12), page 64.
- 46 *Charles Wesley's Journal*, 17 May 1738.
- 47 *PW* Volume 1, pp 97-99 (*H&SP* 1739). There is a certain stiffness about this early hymn which reminds us of John rather than Charles, but verse 7 ("... Still the Lamb as slain appears/ Still thou stand'st before the throne") is typical of Charles.
- 48 See *The Methodist Hymn Book Illustrated* (Robert Culley, London, 2nd ed, 1909), on this hymn.
- 49 *H&P* 46(3) (*H&SP* 1742).
- 50 *H&P* 325(1) (*HPT* 1746).
- 51 *PW* Volume 4, p 422 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 52 *PW* Volume 3, p 321 (*HoLS* 1745).
- 53 *H&P* 216(1,3) (*H&SP* 1739).
- 54 Alexander Mather (1733-1780) was an early Methodist preacher.
- 55 *H&P* 744(4) (*H&SP* 1740).
- 56 See *The Arminian Magazine*, Vol 2 (1779), p 153.
- 57 Thomas Olivers (1725-1799) was converted by Whitefield's preaching and became one of John Wesley's itinerant preachers in 1753. The tune Helmsley has been ascribed to him.
- 58 *Wesley's Veterans*, ed. John Telford (London, Robert Culley, no date), Volume I, p 213.
- 59 *PW* Volume III, pp 30-31, "O all-redeeming Lord" (*HoGEL* 1741).
- 60 Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, (Penguin Books 1991), p 175.
- 61 *PW* Volume 12, no.2083 (*SH* 1762, on John 14:5).
- 62 *PW* Volume 10, no.81 (*SH* 1762, on Matthew 5:26).
- 63 *PW* Volume 10, no.286 (*SH* 1762, on Matthew 11:24).
- 64 *PW* Volume 10, no.468 (*SH* 1762, on Matthew 18:25).
- 65 *PW* Volume 3, p 104 ("Hear, holy, holy, holy Lord").
- 66 *PW* Volume 1.ii, p 310.
- 67 *PW* Volume 8, p 326 (Hymn IX for the National Fast, 1782).
- 68 *PW* Volume 12, no.2190, "Jesus, with thy Father come" (*SH* 1762, on John 17:23).
- 69 *PW* Volume 10, no.26 (*SH* 1762, on Matthew 3:17).
- 70 *Journal*, 3 September 1741 (Standard Edition, Vol 1:455, 458). The Moravians asserted that "By this his name, all can and shall obtain life and salvation". The other two "grand errors" were antinomianism and quietism.
- 71 *PW* Volume 9, page 255, on Job 19:28, "A living principle of grace". (*SH* 1762).
- 72 *PW* Volume 12, page 348, on Acts 18:8, "A living principle of grace". (*SH* 1762).
- 73 *PW* Volume 12, page 246, no.2583 on Acts 10:15 (*SH* 1762).
- 74 *H&P* 298(1) (*HoLS* 1745).
- 75 Vincent Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, Macmillan & Co 1948, p 200 footnote.
- 76 George Carey, *The Gate of Glory*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1986, p 190.
- 77 *The Three Loves: A Theology of the Wesley Brothers*, *Epworth Review*, July 1997, p 90.

78 *Journal* (Standard Edition, Vol 2:121ff). A somewhat similar experience took place on 1 May
1739 according to a letter dated 10 May from John to his brother Samuel. He relates that "the
power of God (so I call it) came so mightily among us that one, and another, and another fell
down as thunderstruck. In that hour many that were in deep anguish of spirit were filled with
peace and joy..." The *Journal* entry (Standard Edition, Vol 2:186-7) is more restrained.

79 Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England 1728-1760*, Oxford Historical Monographs,
Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, pp 6 and 48.

80 John's field-preaching at Bristol was not, strictly speaking, the Wesleys' first open-air
proclamation of the gospel. On 8 November 1738 they went to a public execution where (John
notes) "My brother took that occasion of declaring the Gospel of peace to a large assembly of
publicans and sinners" (*Journal*, Standard Edition, Vol 2:100).

81 Podmore, *op cit*, p 66.

82 Podmore, *op cit*, p 60.

83 *John Wesley's Journal*, 1 September 1788 (Standard Edition, Vol 6:209).

84 See Sermon 17, para I.7 (*Works*, Outler Edition, Vol 1:405)..

85 See Robert G Tuttle Jr, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology* (Exeter, The Paternoster Press,
1978), p 229.

86 *John Wesley's Journal*, 12 March 1743 (Standard Edition, Vol 1:421f).

87 George Whitefield (1714-1770) was an outstanding preacher and evangelist. He was closely
associated with the Wesleys, but disagreed with them over the issue of Election.

88 The *Journals of George Whitefield*, ed. Robert Backhouse, Hodder & Stoughton, London 1993, p
82.

89 *Letters*, Volume 6, p 6.

90 John had already heeded Peter Böhler's advice, "Preach faith until you have it; and then, when
you have it, you will preach faith".

91 Wesley, *Works*, Volume 5, p 30.

92 Wesley, *Works*, Volume 8, p 49.

93 See, for example, *Journal* 28 August 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:264), 31 August 1747
(Standard Edition, Vol 3:317), 22 June 1761 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:465); see also 24
November 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 3:321). These words found an echo in the experience of
the Irishman Thomas Walsh (1730-1759). He wrote of his conversion, "Faith in His blood
brought heaven into my breast, and filled me with 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy
Ghost". However, Wesley actually described as his "favourite subject" "Jesus Christ, who of
God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption".

94 *Works* 26:288-9.

95 See his *Journal* for that date (Standard Edition, Vol. 5:288).

96 *Charles Wesley's Journal*, 9 May 1740 (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 229).

97 Sermon 10, "The Witness of the Spirit". I.7 (*Works*, Outler Edition, Vol 1:274).

98 Silas Told (1711-1778) became Master of the Foundry School in 1744, but is chiefly
remembered as a diligent prison visitor, and as the author of *The Life of Silas Told, related by
himself* (see below).

99 *The Life of Silas Told, related by himself*, Epworth Press, London, 1954, p 67.

100 John R Tyson, *Charles Wesley on Sanctification*, Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids, 1986, p
92.

101 John R Tyson, "Charles Wesley and Edward Young", in *Methodist History*, Volume XXVII.1
(January 1989), pub. Madison, New Jersey, p 117.

102 *Ib*, p 117.

103 *H&P* 217(4) (*H&SP* 1742).

104 Ed. Thomas Jackson, Wesleyan Conference Centre, London, 1871. For Thomas Walsh, see note
92.

105 *PW* Volume 13, p 62 (SH 1762).

106 John Wesley, *Letters* 4, p 144, 1761; quoted by John Munsey Turner, *Conflict and
Reconciliation*, Epworth Press 1985, p 48.

107 *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, 12 June 1784.

108 The text here is on pp 256-257 of Volume 2 of the Standard Edition of John Wesley's *Journal*.
Butler's phrase was applied to an alleged claim by Whitefield, not Wesley, though he obviously
thought the latter tarred by the same brush. Wesley gave the somewhat ambiguous reply: "I
pretend to no extraordinary revelations, or gifts of the Holy Ghost: none but what every
Christian may receive and ought to expect and pray for".

- 109 See Tony Lane, *The Lion Concise Book of Christian Thought*, Lion Publishing plc,
Third Edition, 1996, pp 163-164.
- 110 PW Volume 5, p 363 (H&SP 1749). The more inclusive language in H&P (728) begins "How
can we sinners know", and omits lines 5-8 of the quotation. Wesley originally italicised the
words "know" and "my" in verse 1.
- 111 PW Volume 5, p 365, "How shall a slave released" H&SP 1749).
- 112 PW Volume 12, p 99 (SH 1762).
- 113 *Olney Hymns* II, p 29.
- 114 Norman P Goldhawk, *On Hymns and Hymn-Books*, Epworth Press, London, 1979, p 43.
- 115 PW Volume 3, p 321 (HoLS 1745), "He dies, as now for us he dies!"
- 116 George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, Ch.2. "The most celebrated of Methodist women preachers was
Elizabeth Evans, 'better known in literature', states the memorial tablet to her in Wirksworth
Chapel, 'as Dinah Morris, "a mother in Israel"'. (*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*,
Volume XIV (1923-24), pp 104-109). This identification is however disputed, for Deborah M
Valenze, in *Prophetic Sons and Daughters* (Princeton University Press, 1985), says that Dinah is
an accurate depiction of Elizabeth Tomlinson, George Eliot's aunt by marriage.
- 117 *John Wesley's Journal*, 29 August 1748 (Standard Edition, Vol 3:374).
- 118 John Nelson (1707-1774) was a stonemason and one of John Wesley's best-known preachers.
- 119 *The Journal of Mr John Nelson*, ed. Thomas Jackson (Wesleyan Conference Centre, London,
1865), p 18.
- 120 William Grimshaw (1708-1763) opened his pulpit to the Wesleys when he became Vicar of
Haworth in 1742.
- 121 Quoted in *Methodist Heroes in the Great Haworth Round 1734-1784*, compiled by J W Laycock
(Wadsworth & Co, Keighley, 1909) p 34.
- 122 Life of Sampson Staniforth in *Wesley's Veterans*, ed. John Telford (London, Robert Culley, no
date) Vol. I page 74-75. This was c.1743; the hymn "And can it be" was written four years
previously and is therefore in all probability being quoted. Interestingly, the hymn then
contained a verse (omitted in 1780 and ever since) beginning, "Still the small inward voice I
hear, / That whispers all my sins forgiven". Staniforth (1720-1799) was an early Methodist
preacher.
- 123 PW, Volume 12, no.2698 (SH 1762).
- 124 H&P 460(5) (RH 1747).
- 125 PW Volume 3, p 321 (HoLS 1745).
- 126 George Shadford (1739-1816) was one of John Wesley's preachers.
- 127 *Early Methodist Preachers*, Vol 6 p 150; ed Thomas Jackson; Wesleyan Conference Centre,
London, 1871. The reference to the Lord coming suddenly to his temple is based on Malachi
3:1, "...and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple". Hence the lines in
"Love divine, all loves excelling" "Suddenly return, and never/ Never more thy temples leave"
(H&P 267(2)).
- 128 Geoffrey Wainwright, "Our Elder Brethren Join: The Wesleys' *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* and
the Patristic Revival in England", *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society*, Volume I, 1994,
p 27.
- 129 H&P 298 (HoLS 1745).
- 130 H&P 325 (HPT 1746).
- 131 PW Volume 3, p 220 (HoLS 1745).
- 132 Beckerlegge and Kimbrough, *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, Kingswood Books,
Nashville, Tennessee, 1992.
- 133 PW Volume 3, p 217 (HoLS 1745).
- 134 PW Volume 3, p 219 (HoLS 1745).
- 135 Thomas Taylor (1738-1816) was one of John Wesley's preachers and a member of his "Inner
Cabinet" of trusted counsellors.
- 136 *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers*, Vol 5, p 11; ed Thomas Jackson; Wesleyan Conference
Centre, London, 1871.
- 137 Sarah Ryan was John Wesley's Housekeeper at Kingswood who, says Henry Rack (*Reasonable
Enthusiast*, p 268) "had had a spectacular career as a sinner and was at least a bigamist...[but]
also had spectacular visions and spiritual experiences".
- 138 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume II, pp 300-302.
- 139 PW Volume 3, p 321 (HoLS 1745, "He dies, as now for us he dies").
- 140 PW Volume 3, p 306 (HoLS 1745).

- 141 *H&P* 325 (2) (*HPT* 1746).
- 142 *PW* Volume 2, p 166-167 (*H&SP* 1742).
- 143 *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*, Volume 2, p 211; ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1992.
- 144 *H&P* 241(3) (*HIAM* 1758). One wonders whether Wesley had in mind the words of Richard Hooker: "Yea in this respect the very glorified body of Christ retained in it the scars and marks of former mortality" (*Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Everyman, J M Dent & Co, London, 1907, p 217).
- 145 See S Hardman Moore, "Sacrifice in Puritan Typology" on p 189 of *Sacrifice and Redemption* (ed. S W Sykes), CUP 1991.
- 146 See above, page 101.
- 147 *H&P* 298 (*HoLS* 1745).
- 148 From "Lamb of God, whose bleeding love" (*HoLS* 1745). This verse was in *MHB* but has been omitted from *H&P* 550.
- 149 Geoffrey Wainwright, "Our Elder Brethren Join: The Wesleys' *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* and the Patristic Revival in England", *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society*, Volume 1, 1994, p 14. The hymn in question is to be found at *PW* Volume 3, p 305.
- 150 *PW* Volume 3, p 309.
- 151 *H&P* 593.
- 152 *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, ed. Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett, Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1988, p 345.
- 153 Toplady, *Petitionary Hymns* XXXVII (9).
- 154 From "Lamb of God, whose dying love" (*HoLS* 1745). This verse was in *MHB* but has been omitted from *H&P* 550.
- 155 *Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the first time transcribed from the Original by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge* (*WHS Occasional Publication* 1987), p 69.
- 156 I have dealt at length with the Wesleys' changing attitude to their "conversion" experiences in Chapter 5.2, The Holy Spirit and the Atonement.
- 157 Quoted by Henry D Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, Epworth Press, London, 1989, p 27, from C J Abbey and J H Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, Longmans 1878, p 325.
- 158 *John Wesley's Journal*, 13 September 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol. 2:274f).
- 159 *Charles Wesley's Journal* (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 143).
- 160 This topic is dealt with in Chapter 6.
- 161 *PW*, Volume 10, no.1312 on Jeremiah 13:27 (*SH* 1762).
- 162 *PWHS*, Volume 38, p 49.
- 163 Melville Horne was one of John Wesley's preachers and became curate of John Fletcher's church at Madeley in 1785, after Fletcher's death; he was ordained in the following year.
- 164 *An Investigation of the Definition of Justifying Faith* (1809), quoted by Bernard G Holland, *The Conversions of John and Charles Wesley and their Place in Methodist Tradition*, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Volume 38, p 53.
- 165 *PWHS*, Volume 36, p 65.
- 166 For John Nelson, see note 117.
- 167 *The Journal of Thomas Nelson (1707-1774)*, ed. Thomas Jackson, Wesleyan Conference Centre, London, 1865, p 18.
- 168 Thomas Rankin was one of John Wesley's preachers, ordained by him in 1789.
- 169 *Wesley's Veterans*, ed. John Telford (London, Robert Culley, no date) Vol. VI page 126.
- 170 John Wesley's *Works*, Volume 8, p 293; see Bernard G Holland, *A Species of Madness*, *PWHS* Volume 39, p 84.
- 171 *John Wesley's Journal*, 1 December 1767; Standard Edition, Vol 5:244; see Bernard G Holland, *A Species of Madness*, ib p 84.
- 172 *Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the first time transcribed from the Original by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge* (*WHS Occasional Publication* 1987), p 91.
- 173 *PW* Volume 4, p 224 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 174 *H&P* 418 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 175 *PW*, Volume 10, no.18 on Matthew 3:9 (*SH* 1762).
- 176 Vincent Taylor, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, Macmillan, London 1948, p 57.

177 Thus Joanna and Alister McGrath, *The Dilemma of Self Esteem*, Crossway Books, Wheaton
Illinois, 1992, pp 96-97.

178 Quoted by Joanna and Alister McGrath, *ib*, p 99.

179 *ib*, p 98.

Luther shows the tendency to extend St Paul's words about "putting on" Christ in Romans
13:14 and Galatians 3:27 into "clothing oneself" with Christ and then, by analogy with Job
29:14, Zech 3:4 and Isaiah 61:10, seeing Christ's righteousness as a garment.

180 *Christ the Representative* (translated from the German by David Lewis), SCM Press, London,
1967, pp 76-77.

181 Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1953, pp 174-175.

182 *ib*, p 177.

183 *ib* p 182. The idea of God *declaring* sinners righteous, by which they actually *become*
righteous, emerges in Barth: the Christian faith "believes in a sentence which is absolutely
effective, so that man is not merely called righteous before God, but is righteous before God"
(*Church Dogmatics*, trans. G W Bromiley, T&T Clark, Edinburgh 1956, IV.1.95)

184 Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative* (translated from the German by David Lewis)
(SCM Press 1967), p 76.

185 Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760) founded the colony of Herrnhut in Saxony, and became a
Moravian bishop. His emphasis on feeling in religion influenced German theology.

186 Quoted by Franz Hildebrandt, "Can the Distinctive Methodist Emphasis be said to be rooted in
the New Testament?", *London Quarterly Review*, 1959, p 233. John Wesley had also written,
"For if the personal obedience of Christ...be mine the moment I believe, can anything be added
thereto? Does my obeying God add anything to the perfect obedience of Christ? On this
scheme, then, are not holy and unholy on the very same footing?" (*Works*, Volume 10, p 303).

187 "On God's Vineyard" I.5, in *Works*, Volume 7.

188 *Charles Wesley's Journal* (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 126f).

189 *Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the
first time transcribed from the Original by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge (WHS
Occasional Publication 1987), p 14.*

190 "And can it be" (*H&P* 216: *H&SP* 1739).

191 See *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 12 (1789). No date is given, but the implication is that
it is a late hymn by Charles; even if this is not the case, it is unlikely that John, who edited the
magazine, would have included it if it were inconsistent with his views.

192 Sermon on Christ Our Righteousness, II.5 and 12 (*Works*, Outler Edition, Vol 1:455, 458).

193 Minutes of Conference, Monday 25 June 1744.

194 *Works*, Volume 10, p. 314.

195 Sermon on Justification by Faith (*Forty-four Sermons*, Sermon 5, IV.2).

196 This conversation is not in the *Journal*; it can however be found as a footnote at pages 256-257
of the Standard Edition, Volume 2.

197 *John Wesley's Journal*, 9 October 1777 (Standard Edition, Vol 6:173).

198 *Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the
first time transcribed from the Original by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge (WHS
Occasional Publication 1987), p 35.*

199 *PW* Volume 13, p 204, no. 3408 (*SH* 1762).

200 *PW* Volume 5, p 29 (*H&SP* 1749).

201 *PW* Volume 2, p 240 (*H&SP* 1742, "Oft I in my heart have said").

202 From *HoLS* 1745 (*PW* Volume 3, pp 229-231).. The relevant verse was in *MHB* but has been
omitted from *H&P*.

203 *PW* Volume 5, p 245-246 (*H&SP* 1749).

204 See C J Podmore, article "The Fetter Lane Society 1739-40" in *PWHS XLVII* p 171. Podmore
writes: "Molther was shocked at what he found at Fetter Lane: the groaning, crying, contortions
and strange gestures at the meeting were, he remarked in a letter written ten days after his arrival,
'enough to bring one out in a cold sweat'... The Moravian stress on 'stillness' should be seen as
a response to this disorderly situation". It is nevertheless made clear in this article that the
doctrine of stillness was present already in the spring of 1738.

205 Luther's Introduction [Preface] to his Commentary on Galatians, based on the "Middleton"
edition of the English translation of 1575; James Clark & Co Ltd, London 1953, p 25.

206 *ib*, p 28.

207 *John Wesley's Journal*, 31 December 1739.

208 *John Wesley's Journal*, 31 December 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:328ff).
 209 *ib*, 16 July 1740 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:365).
 210 Henry D Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, Epworth Press, London, 1989, p 204.
 211 Thomas Jackson was an indefatigable editor and biographer in nineteenth-century Methodism.
 212 Peter Böhler (1712-1775) had been converted by Zinzendorf and became a minister, and later
 bishop, in the Moravian church. At first he had momentous influence on the Wesleys, but the
 latter then parted company with the Moravians over such matters as Stillness and Perfection.
 213 John Gambold was a member of the Holy Club and was ordained in 1733. He became a
 Moravian minister at Fetter Lane in 1744, and eventually a Moravian bishop.
 214 Westley Hall has been described a "the Judas of the [Holy Club]...In after years he turned out an
 unmitigated scoundrel, and was a sore trouble to the Wesley family" (*A New History of
 Methodism*, ed. W J Townsend and others, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1909, p 148).
 215 Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791) joined the Methodists in 1739, and also appointed
 George Whitefield as her Chaplain in 1746. She assumed leadership among his followers, who
 became known as "the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion".
 216 See notes to *John Wesley's Journal*, 22 January 1741 (Standard Ed. ii.418).
 217 *PW Volume 5*, p 247-248 (*H&SP* 1749).
 218 Letter to John Fletcher.
 219 John R Tyson, *Charles Wesley: A Reader*, OUP 1989, p 97.
 220 *ib*, p 120.
 221 *Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the
 first time transcribed from the original* by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge (WHS
 Occasional Publication 1987), p 62-63.
 222 *John Wesley's Journal*, 5 December 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:109).
 223 See his *Journal* for that date (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 118).
 224 *PW Volume 1*, pp 280-281 (*H&SP* 1739).
 225 It is true that on 17 August 1738 Charles could write: "...Met Mrs Brockmar - one who in
 despair had been directed to Christ, and in a fortnight found peace to her soul, steadfastly
 believing her sin had been imputed to Christ, and his righteousness to her"; and similarly in one
 of his hymns, "Salvation is in Jesu's name" (*H&SP II* 138), he writes: "His blood, we know,
 hath bought our peace,/ We have no hope beside,/ By his imputed righteousness/ We all are
 justified." However, the Wesleys' emphasis on holiness meant that a righteousness far more
 real than that conferred by imputation could and should be sought. (Jackson edition, Volume 1,
 p 126).
 226 *Journal*, 27 August 1768 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:584).
 227 *H&P* 275(2) (*H&SP* 1749).
 228 *H&P* 726(4) (*H&SP* 1742).

6. THE ATONEMENT AND CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Answer that gracious end in me
For which thy precious life was given;
Redeem from all iniquity;
Restore, and make me meet for heaven:
Unless thou purge my every stain,
Thy suffering and my faith are vain.¹

The connection between the doctrines of the atonement and of Christian Perfection may not be immediately obvious. It would be entirely pardonable to conclude that what the death of Christ brought us was simply justification: namely, reconciliation to God, the forgiveness of sins, and a new righteousness reckoned to us by virtue of our relationship with Christ. Sanctification, on the other hand, was the work of the Holy Spirit through his indwelling. Thus Charles W Brockwell Jr, in an article on John Wesley's Doctrine of Justification, paraphrases John's doctrine as saying that "justification, which imputes righteousness to us, is what Christ does *for* us; the imparted righteousness of the life of discipleship, initiated by the new birth and leading to entire sanctification is what the Spirit does *in* us"; this witnesses to John's "appreciation of the continuation of the benefits of the atonement in the life of the believer".² I aim to show that Charles's doctrine of Christian Perfection went beyond this. Just as both the blood of Christ and the witness of the Spirit are instrumental in the work of justification, so both the blood of Christ and the Spirit are instrumental in sanctifying us.

John Wesley attached such importance to Perfection that he referred to it as "the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appears to have raised us up".³ He described the main doctrines of Methodism, which included all the rest, as three: "That of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself".⁴ He saw it as essential for the survival and spread of the Methodist movement. In 1762 he wrote:

The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall, the more I am convinced that they have sustained great loss, for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see, whenever this is not done, the believers grow dead and cold. Nor can this be prevented, but by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love. I say an hourly expectation: for to expect it at death, or some time hence, is much the same as not

expecting it at all.⁵

Likewise in September 1765 he wrote in his Journal:

Monday the 30th and the two following days I examined the society at Bristol, and was surprised to find fifty members fewer than I left in it last October. One reason is, Christian Perfection has been little insisted on; and wherever this is not done, be the preachers ever so eloquent, there is little increase, either in the number or the grace of the hearers.⁶

These dates may be significant, for they follow a notable revival which featured claims of entire sanctification. Before 1760 John had been extremely cautious about admitting such claims, but on 16 February in that year he recorded in his Journal:

On Friday the 13th about thirty persons were met together at Otley...about eight o'clock in the evening, in order (as usual) to pray, sing hymns, and provoke one another to love and good works. After prayer was ended, when they proceeded to speak of the several states of their souls, some, with deep sighs and groans, complained of the burden they felt for the remains of indwelling sin; seeing, in a clearer light, the necessity of a deliverance from it.⁷

Some of these people remained on their knees after the usual time and began to cry out for deliverance, which individuals then began to claim had taken place:

Another said, "I hold thee with a trembling hand, but will not let Thee go"⁸, and in a little time cried out, "Praise the Lord with me; for he hath cleansed my heart from sin!"

This revival, which broke out in many other places, encouraged John to attach much more authenticity to reports of entire sanctification, and appears to have altered his general attitude to the attainment of Christian perfection.

The doctrine was, nevertheless, one which raised many difficult problems, stirred up disputes and opposition, and even distanced him at several points from his brother Charles. We shall consider three problems which it raised. In the first place, what did the Wesleys mean by Perfection? Can it be something less than perfect love in the believer? In the second place, is Perfection possible in this life? And in the third, is it gradual or instantaneous?

What did the Wesleys mean by Perfection?

John would certainly have seen it as significant that, on the morning of 24 May 1738, he had opened his Testament "on those words: '...There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature.' (2 Pet. i. 4.)"; however, he himself stressed that he had been committed to the pursuit of holiness since 1725.⁹ The divine nature, he held, was essentially love, and he wrote that, whereas other clergy saw "sanctification, (or holiness) as if it were an outward thing",

consisting of "1. The doing no harm, 2. The doing good, (as it is called,) i.e. The using the means of grace, and helping our neighbour", *he* believed it to be an inward thing, namely, "The life of God in the soul of man; a participation of the divine nature; the mind that was in Christ; or, the renewal of our heart, after the image of Him that created us".¹⁰ In this he was following the early church fathers, who saw the *telos* or end of human existence as union with God.

From observation, John saw a work of sanctification among his followers; he calls this variously "Christian perfection", "entire sanctification", "perfect love", "the great salvation", occasionally "the second blessing",¹¹ and being "renewed in love".¹² As for the term "sinless perfection", which in retrospect seems particularly open to attack, he wrote that he neither contended for it, nor objected to it.¹³ Of his followers, he wrote:

Constant communion with God the Father and the Son fills their hearts with humble love. Now this is what I always did, and do now mean, by perfection. And this I believe many have attained, on the same evidence that I believe many are justified.¹⁴

Indeed, he speaks of perfection in many places as if it were something experienced instantaneously, and testified to, like justification, by the Holy Spirit. Such an experience must have been encountered by Grace Paddy in Redruth, who told John:

I felt an inexpressible change, in the very depth of my heart; and from that hour I have felt no anger, no pride, no wrong temper of any kind: nothing contrary to the pure love of God, which I feel continually. I desire nothing but Christ; and I have Christ always reigning in my heart.¹⁵

Reflecting in 1762 on his own experience, he wrote:

Many years ago my brother frequently said, "Your day of Pentecost is not fully come; but I doubt not it will: and you will then hear of persons sanctified, as you do now of persons justified".¹⁶

Unfortunately, early optimism about the perfectibility of the Methodists was soon dashed. People fell away, especially under persecution; or the "old Adam" in them, though at first obscured, emerged later on. If a convert beat his wife, cheated his customers, took snuff,¹⁷ or traded in smuggled goods,¹⁸ he was not really sanctified. Had such people been sanctified at all? (To put it another way, could one fall back from the attainment of perfection?). Was it a gradual, rather than an instantaneous process? Might we have to wait until the moment of death (or beyond) to achieve it? And on these points John was often at variance with other Methodists, and in particular with Charles.

When John states his doctrine in positive terms, it seems unexceptionable:

By Christian perfection, I mean (as I have said again and again) the so loving God and our neighbour, as to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks."¹⁹

"The love of God and our neighbour: the image of God stamped on the heart: the life of God in the soul of man: the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ also walked".²⁰

In 1770 he related:

When I spoke nearly to the same effect [on Christian Perfection], to one of the late Bishops of London, Bishop Gibson, he said earnestly, "Why, Mr Wesley, if this is what you mean by Perfection, who can be against it?"²¹

The problem, however, was that it was difficult to reconcile the idea of having "the mind that was in Christ" with the emphasis on instantaneous sanctification (the "hourly expectation") which we have already referred to. John did not wish to go back on his belief that Methodists needed to look for this experience and that this was the way to make the societies grow. His solution was to define "sin" as "a voluntary transgression of a known law which it is in our power to obey",²² and to see Perfection as losing one's inclination to transgress. Elsewhere he said:

By sin I here understand outward sin, according to the plain common acceptation of the word; an actual voluntary transgression of the law; of the revealed, written law of God; of any commandment of God, acknowledged to be such at the time it is transgressed. But "whosoever is born of God," while he abideth in faith and love, and the spirit of thanksgiving, not only doth not, but cannot thus commit sin.²³

To lose the desire to commit sin within this definition was indeed a practical possibility, and its attainment could well be instantaneous. John may have had in mind the teaching of 1 John 3:4-6:

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No-one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No-one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.²⁴

The problem with using such a text to define sin and, hence, Perfection, is that it hardly requires a "second blessing" or similar experience to eliminate the desire to commit deliberate sin. St John clearly implies that those who deliberately sin are not true Christians at all.

John points out more than once that his definition excludes several categories of wrongdoing. He wrote:

We willingly allow...that there is no such perfection in this life, as implies either a dispensation from doing good, and attending all the ordinances of God; or a freedom from ignorance, mistake, temptation, and a thousand infirmities necessarily connected with flesh and blood.²⁵

The proposition which I hold is this: "A person may be cleansed from all sinful tempers, and yet need the atoning blood". For what? For negligences and ignorances, for both words and actions (as well as omissions) which are in a sense transgressions of the perfect law.²⁶

This consorts well with a second statement within the First Letter of St John, which the Church has traditionally applied to all Christians:

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.²⁷

The apparent contradiction between this and the former passage is usually explained by the use of sin in two different senses: Chapter 3 seems to refer to deliberate wrongdoing (John Wesley's definition, in effect), and Chapter 1 to lack of true holiness, or the extent to which we (knowingly or not) fall short of the glory of God. It is this latter sense which has been taken by the Church generally as defining sin. Thus Professor H R McIntosh wrote:

...Sin means every disposition and action which lacks faith and love. Sin, essentially, is selfish failure to trust and obey God.²⁸

William Temple was even more dismissive of the definition of sin as deliberate wrongdoing:

St Paul's definition of sin is "falling short of the glory of God". It is quite impossible to estimate the amount of harm done by our habitual limitation of the use of the word "sin" to deliberate wrong-doing. Everything about us is sin if it is not what God wants it to be.²⁹

In this vein Luther wrote, "The final proof of the sinner is that he does not know his own sin". And in the Methodist Service Book we are enjoined to confess our sins "through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault" - and most of us would feel that the first two categories are much more significant than the third.

Charles, who was much less committed to the nurture of Methodist societies up and down the country than his brother, found this watering down of the concept of perfection unacceptable. For him, perfection was perfection: it meant having the mind of Christ. In 1742 he wrote a 28-verse hymn, "God of all power, and truth, and grace",³⁰ which contained the lines

Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free;
The mind which was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to thee.

John did not dissent from that; indeed, he placed it in his book *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. But as time went by, Charles became increasingly concerned about John's effective disregard of the ideal.

Is Perfection possible in this life?

Both Wesleys were in no doubt that the Christian could be perfected. John quoted many texts from scripture,³¹ among them "I will also save you from all your uncleanness" (Ezekiel 36:29); "He shall redeem Israel from all his sins" (Psalm 130:8); "[I pray]...that they may be perfect in one" (John 17:23); "The very peace of God sanctify you wholly" (1 Thessalonians 5:23); "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

We may find this use of proof-texts less convincing, and even modern fundamentalists have been wary of drawing the same conclusion. For his part, Charles did not doubt the principle of Perfection: in his Journal he records on 12 July 1741:

I declared the two great truths of the everlasting gospel, universal redemption and Christian Perfection.

In his hymns, he asserts the doctrine uncompromisingly:

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, "it shall be done!"
Obedient faith, that waits on thee,
Thou never wilt reprove,
But thou wilt form thy Son in me,
And perfect me in love.³²

1. All things are possible to him
That can in Jesu's name believe:
Lord, I no more thy truth blaspheme,
Thy truth I lovingly receive;
I can, I do, believe in thee;
All things are possible to me.
2. The most impossible of all
Is that I e'er from sin should cease;
Yet shall it be, I know it shall:
Jesus, look to thy faithfulness!
If nothing is too hard for thee,
All things are possible to me.
3. Though earth and hell the word gainsay,
The word of God shall never fail;
The Lamb shall take my sins away,
'Tis certain, though impossible;
The thing impossible shall be;
All things are possible to me.
4. When thou the work of faith hast wrought,
I here shall in thine image shine,
Nor sin in deed, or word, or thought:
Let men exclaim, and fiends repine,
They cannot break the firm decree;
All things are possible to me.

5. Thy mouth, O Lord, hath spoke, hath sworn,
That I shall serve thee without fear;
Shall find the pearl, which others spurn,
Holy, and pure, and perfect here;
The servant as his Lord shall be:
All things are possible to me.
6. All things are possible to God,
To Christ, the power of God in man,
To me, when I am all renewed,
When I in Christ am formed again,
And witness, from all sin set free,
All things are possible to me.³³

But, as we shall see, Charles came eventually to doubt that this was a practical possibility before the moment of death; and there were other serious differences between him and John.

Foremost among the Wesleys' opponents on this point were the Calvinists. Calvin himself was more receptive to the concept of perfection than is generally supposed, holding that the saints should go on to perfection in holiness;³⁴ but he certainly did not think that it was attainable in this life. His followers were less sympathetic. One of Wesley's preachers, John Pawson, wrote of Scotland, after his assignment to preach there, as "this country where Perfection is accounted one of the greatest and most abominable errors in the world".³⁵ A distinctively Calvinist approach can be seen in Toplady's hymns, where, if sanctification is to come at all, it will not be until the hour of death. In the meantime, the believer must satisfy his longing with the imputed righteousness of Christ:

Jesus, thou tried Foundation Stone
From whose prevailing blood alone
Thy saints expect salvation,
My robe thou art, I feel thy grace,
And triumph in thy righteousness
Made mine by imputation.

Toplady is in fact very strong on the doctrine of imputed righteousness and being "clothed with Christ", which parallels his substitutionary theory of the atonement:

- 1....
Us thou dost in Christ receive,
Clothed with Christ we come to thee:
Him thou didst for sinners give
Their *Substitute* to be.³⁶

This theme is pursued further in a hymn³⁷ "Thanksgiving for the righteousness of Christ":

Fountain of never ceasing grace,
Thy saint's exhaustless theme,
Great object of immortal praise,
Essentially supreme;
We bless thee for the glorious fruits
Thy Incarnation gives,
The righteousness which grace *imputes*,
And faith alone *receives*.

It is reasonable to assume that Toplady, who was one of John Wesley's "most abusive and intemperate critics",³⁸ was writing polemical verse here (note his italics), just as much as Charles when he wrote about God's grace for all mankind. It is well known that the Calvinistic school wanted to stress our utter unworthiness before the judgement throne, whereas the Wesleys believed that God had the power to sanctify. So the "glorious fruits" given by the Incarnation are, for Calvinists, not the love, joy, peace, and so forth of Galatians 5:22-23 but merely the imputed righteousness of Christ.

What doubtless pained John Wesley the more was the opposition he encountered from the Moravians. He wrote:

...After a time a cry arose, and (what a little surprised me) among religious men, who affirmed, not that I stated perfection wrong, but that "there is no perfection on earth"; nay, and fell vehemently on my brother and me for affirming the contrary. We scarce expected so rough an attack from these; especially as we were clear on justification by faith, and careful to ascribe the whole of salvation to the mere grace of God.³⁹

Doubtless he had in mind the well-known encounter in 1741 with Peter Böhler. After seeing a woman close to death but with her soul "all joy and praise", saying "I am washed: I am cleansed", John spoke to Böhler, who replied:

There is no such state on earth. Sin will and must always remain in the soul. The old man will remain until death. The old nature is like an old tooth. You may break off one bit, and another and another; but you can never get it all away: the stump of it will stay as long as you live.⁴⁰

A few days earlier he had spoken to Spangenberg, who was adamant that corruption remained in his old nature. When "a few of our brethren and sisters...spoke what they experienced", he told them, "with great emotion, his hand trembling much":

You all deceive your own souls. There is no higher state than that I have described. You are in a very dangerous error. You know not your own hearts. You fancy your corruptions are taken away, whereas they are only covered. Inward corruption never can be taken away, till our bodies are in the dust.⁴¹

Not long afterwards John had a conversation with Zinzendorf in Gray's Inn Walk; Charles was reportedly also present. Zinzendorf argued: "I know of no such thing as inherent perfection in this life. This is the error of errors...Christ is our only perfection. All Christian perfection is simply faith in Christ's blood...Christian perfection is entirely

imputed, not inherent... A Christian is never perfect *in se*... The event of sanctification and justification is completed in an instant. Therefore, it neither increases nor decreases...One does not grow in God's love. From the moment of justification he loves as entirely as he is also sanctified wholly."⁴² The Wesleys, however, believed that the power of God was stronger than sin:

Jesus, the First and Last,
On thee my soul is cast:
Thou didst thy work begin
By blotting out my sin;
Thou wilt the root remove,
And perfect me in love.⁴³

Unfortunately, they were not helped by a controversy within their own ranks. One result of the revival I have referred to in the early 1760s was that a group led by Thomas Maxfield (Wesley's first lay preacher) and George Bell (who had been converted in 1758 and quickly gathered round him a following of fellow "enthusiasts") set themselves up as a cadre who walked about London "as perfect as the angels are perfect".⁴⁴ Their conduct, said John, "made the very name of Perfection stink in the nostrils of those who had loved and honoured it before".⁴⁵ On 1 November 1762 he wrote a long, reasoned, and charitable letter to Maxfield explaining where he agreed with him and where he differed. In it, he said:⁴⁶

1. I like your doctrine of perfection, or pure love; love excluding sin. Your insisting that it is merely by faith; that consequently it is instantaneous, (though preceded and followed by a gradual work,) and that it may be now, at this instant.

But I dislike your supposing man may be as perfect as an angel; that he can be absolutely perfect; that he can be infallible, or above being tempted; or, that the moment he is pure in heart he cannot fall from it.

His efforts at reproof and reconciliation proved fruitless; Maxfield renounced connexion with him (Bell having already been disowned by Wesley), not before considerable harm had been done to Methodism.⁴⁷ As we shall see, the differences between John and Charles sharpened at just about this time.

Charles had begun confidently by asserting God's power to perfect us; he could write:

1. All things are possible to him
That can in Jesu's name believe:
Lord, I no more thy truth blaspheme,
Thy truth I lovingly receive;
I can, I do, believe in thee;
All things are possible to me.
2. The most impossible of all
Is that I e'er from sin should cease;
Yet shall it be, I know it shall:....⁴⁸

and again:

...But thou canst perfect *me* in love,
Canst perfect *me* in love *today*.⁴⁹

Even John was none too happy about this. It is interesting that "Love divine, all loves excelling" originally contained a verse omitted from the definitive 1780 book (though it now appears in *Mission Praise*):

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast,
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest;
Take away our power of sinning,
Alpha and Omega be,
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

It has been suggested that John Wesley probably removed this verse because he objected to the idea that God could or would "take away our power of sinning", and stated explicitly, "Therefore, I retract several expressions in our hymns, which partly express, partly imply, such an impossibility [ie that we could sin]".⁵⁰ But Charles was probably aware of the statement by St Augustine that the new freedom given by God would confer the inability to sin (*non posse peccare*).⁵¹

As time went on, the position was reversed. It was John, not Charles, who seemed over-enthusiastic, for as I have already mentioned John was pressing his followers to attain a "perfection" which fell far short of what that term ought to mean. And it was Charles who was the restraining influence, seeing sanctification in mystical terms as a communion with God "Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea, /And lost in thine immensity".⁵² Such an ideal could only find its consummation in death:

What is the pleasure of my Lord?
What is his will concerning me?
That I in holiness restored
And pure in heart, my God should see;
Changed by the power of faith Divine,
Should put, with Christ, his image on,
And glorious as my Maker shine,
And dying shout - "the work is done!"⁵³

Is Perfection gradual or instantaneous?

John gave considerable emphasis to the experience already mentioned of "entire sanctification". He wrote in 1767:

2. As to the manner, I believe that this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith; consequently in an instant. But I believe in a gradual work both preceding

and following that instant.

3. As to the time. I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before.⁵⁴

In practice he tended to emphasise the experience of sanctification in the course of our present life, rather than on the advent of the next, as in this letter:

There may be some rare cases wherein God has determined not to bestow His perfect love till a little before death; but this I feel is uncommon: He does not usually put off the fulfilling of His promises.⁵⁵

In an unpublished letter to Charles Wesley dated 10 November 1762, William Briggs⁵⁶ reported a sermon which John had just preached. John had said that salvation was to be convinced of sin, to be justified and to be sanctified. Justification or New Birth was an instantaneous work of the Holy Ghost, but sanctification was also instantaneous, being the death of sin. This was not, said John, a new doctrine, but rather what he had preached from the beginning.⁵⁷

There were, no doubt, superficial attractions in exhorting the Methodist societies to "seek this blessing and expect it at every moment",⁵⁸ because it gave them a goal to aim at. Nevertheless, as I shall argue shortly, this proved to be the Achilles heel of the doctrine.

The experience of sanctification, as I have already indicated, did not necessarily always endure. In *The Arminian Magazine*, William Green⁵⁹ describes both his justification and his sanctification:

About two o'clock the next morning, Dec. 30, 1770, I was waked by a full sense of the love of God. The skies poured down righteousness into my soul, and I could boldly say,

For me, I now believe he died!

He made my every crime his own.⁶⁰

I was now happy in God; his Spirit bearing witness with my spirit that I was a child of God... My faith was strengthened, my peace flowed as a river, and I had a clearer view of a crucified Saviour. About this time, a Hymn-book of Mr Charles Wesley's fell into my hands, which speaks largely and particularly concerning entire Sanctification. I read it with attention, and comparing it with the Scripture, a fair prospect opened to my view... Words to this purpose flowed from my lips,

Shew me, as my soul can bear,
The depth of inbred sin!
All the unbelief declare,
The pride that lurks within;
Take me, whom thyself hast bought,
Bring into captivity
Every high aspiring thought,
That would not stoop to thee.⁶¹

My prayer was answered; I had a surprising view of the total sinfulness of my heart...⁶²

Green now heard John Wesley preach at Spitalfields on "Now is the day of salvation".

After two days of continual prayer, he experienced sanctification, but only for a time:

I felt that Faith which bringeth salvation, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In that moment I was as clearly saved from sin, as ever I was justified. And this blessing was bestowed upon me, only eight weeks after the former.

Surely when God gives any blessing, it is his will that we should keep it. But I did not keep this long... I forgot, that I had need every moment of the intercession of Christ. And I fixt my own meaning on several texts of scripture, which exposed me to a flood of enthusiasm. This brought on some loving opposition from my brethren, which was not always received in the spirit of meekness. And I sunk lower and lower, till I had no longer any pretence to perfect love.⁶³

Green did in fact have a renewal of his feelings of sanctification, but John could not be unaware of the transience of such experiences. On 15 March 1770 he wrote to a Mrs Barton:

Although many taste of the heavenly gift, deliverance from inbred sin, yet so few, so exceeding few, retain it one year, hardly one in ten, nay one in thirty. Many hundreds in London were made partakers of it within sixteen or eighteen months; but I doubt whether twenty of them as now as holy or as happy as they were.⁶⁴

It was inevitable that Charles, with his "high" view of perfection, should see it as necessarily a lifelong process. Already, in 1742, he had written those words just quoted:

Show me, as my soul can bear,
The depth of inbred sin;
All the unbelief declare,
The pride that lurks within.⁶⁵

and thus effectively asserting that holiness must be gradual. Later, it seems, the doctrine became explicit in him.

John, however, continued to emphasise the instantaneous experience which could be prayed for and shared with others in the class or society. In 1762 he recorded:

The next morning, I spoke severally with those who believed they were sanctified. They were 51 in all; 21 men, 21 widows or married women, and nine young women or children. In one of these the change was wrought three weeks after she was justified; in three, seven days after it; in one, five days; and in S. Lutwich, aged fourteen, two days only.⁶⁶

Notice that these were people who *believed* they were sanctified because they had had an experience; they were not people in whom the qualities of love, joy and peace were yet evident. This emphasis on experience was a further weakness in John's approach. In his letter to Mrs Maitland dated 12 May 1763, from which I have already quoted, he writes (and I have italicised the words "experience" and "feel"):

By Christian perfection, I mean (as I have said again and again) the so loving God and our neighbour, as to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." He that *experiences* this, is scripturally perfect. And if you do not, yet you may *experience* it: you surely will, if you follow hard after it; for the scripture cannot be broken...

"But is there no sin in those who are perfect in love?" I believe not: But be that as it may, they *feel* none; no temper contrary to pure love, while they rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually.

And whether sin is suspended, or extinguished, I will not dispute: it is enough that they *feel* nothing but love.

The emphasis on experience was, as I have shown in Chapter 5, an essential and distinctive part of Methodism. However, it was one thing to stress that sinners groaning under a load of guilt “should know, should feel” their sins forgiven,⁶⁷ and another to suggest that people who felt or experienced perfection were in any sense perfect. John seems to have come to recognise the danger here: in his sermon “The Scripture Way of Salvation”, he says:

How naturally do those who experience such a change imagine that sin is gone; that it is wholly rooted out of their heart, and has no place therein! How easily do they draw that inference, I *feel* no sin; therefore I *have* none; it does not *stir*; therefore it does not exist: it has no *motion*, therefore it has no *being*.⁶⁸

And he acknowledges that Macarius had described exactly the same error fourteen hundred years before.⁶⁹ In a letter to Mrs Maitland⁷⁰ dated 12 May 1763 he wrote:

Does not talking of a justified or sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God according to our own works; according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour.⁷¹

Likewise he was conscious of the danger of extravagant claims, and had devised tests to verify the genuine experience:

Sun. Dec 2 [1744]. I was with two persons who believe they are saved from all sin. Be it so or not, why should we not rejoice in the work of God, so far as it is unquestionably wrought in them? For instance, I ask John C., “Do you pray always? Do you rejoice in God every moment? Do you in every thing give thanks? in loss, in pain, in sickness, weariness, disappointments? Do you desire nothing? Do you fear nothing? Do you feel the love of God continually in your heart? Have you a witness in whatever you speak or do, that is pleasing to God?” If he can solemnly and deliberately answer in the affirmative, why do I not rejoice and praise God on his behalf? Perhaps, because I have an exceeding complex idea of sanctification, or a sanctified man; and so, for fear he should not have attained all I include in that idea, I cannot rejoice in what he has attained.⁷²

But whatever caveats John made, the impression had been given that Methodists should seek an *experience* of sanctification and that this was a change wrought in them by the Holy Spirit. In the same sermon already quoted, and after his caveats, he says:

“But does God work this great work in the soul *gradually* or *instantaneously*?” Perhaps it may be wrought gradually in some. I mean in this sense - they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin “by the breath of his mouth”, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye”.⁷³

Thus, however much he recognised the dangers of a sanctification based on experience, John continued to advocate it as a target to aim at. He wrote to Charles:

That perfection which I believe, I can boldly preach, because I think I see five hundred witnesses of it. Of *that perfection* which you preach, you do not even think you see any witness at all... Therefore I still think to set perfection *so high* is effectually to renounce it.⁷⁴

(We may note the basic illogicality of a “perfection” which was less high than what could otherwise be conceived).

That Charles had no witnesses was not entirely correct: I have already (page 91) referred to Hannah Richardson, who claimed as she lay dying, “I am sanctified wholly, spirit, soul and body”. And on 14 January 1750 Charles wrote: “A daughter of our brother Grimshaw was just departed in the Lord, being perfected in a short space”. A letter from the preacher John Nelson dated 1 February 1747/8 and reproduced in *The Arminian Magazine*⁷⁵ describes the death of a man who had been concerned “in sending me for a Soldier” (Nelson had been conscripted at the instigation of his enemies):

He said, “Last night at twelve o’clock God changed me; and I have had as great encouragement to die as ever man had”... He never complained of either pain or illness, but seemed to be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit.

Many more instances could be given of Methodists whose character became increasingly radiant as death approached. John himself like to boast, “Our people die well”.

The difference between sanctification and forgiveness is that the latter is clearly a single act by God (though it must be repeated for later sins), but perfection, on the well-nigh unanimous view of the Church, is a continuing process. My own belief is that the experience of sanctification was a genuine experience but pointed the subject towards a state, rather than providing an assurance of that state. It should have encouraged him or her to “go on to perfection” rather than being regarded as a sign that he or she had arrived. An encounter with the Holy cannot be taken as a sign that one is intrinsically holy oneself.

Charles, on the other hand, saw Perfection as the elimination from our natures of that “falling short of the glory of God” which we have just mentioned. The divine nature, in which 2 Peter 1:4 promised that we should participate⁷⁶ was essentially love. It involved a change in our own nature, and not just in our volition. It went much further than John’s conception, but in the early days of the Revival, Charles nevertheless seemed to view it as attainable. In “O God, was ever heart like mine”⁷⁷ he wrote:

If thou hast power and will to save,
Saved to the utmost I shall be,
The fulness of the Godhead have;
For all the Godhead is in thee.

As a statement of what God *could* do, that was perhaps acceptable. But to celebrate it as a fact went too far:

4. We wrestle not with flesh and blood,
We strive with sin no more...
5. We cannot now, we cannot sin,
For we are born of God.⁷⁸

John decided, under pressure of controversy, that he could not defend these expressions, and marked these verses for omission in future editions.⁷⁹ Similarly, when charged by a Mr Hill with believing that “While one evil thought can rise/ I am not born again”, his defence was, “My brother said so once: I never did”; he was able to add that “All the struggle then is o’er” and “I wrestle not now” were “two of my brother’s expressions, which I do not subscribe to”. Unless we are using *Mission Praise*, we do not sing the original second verse of “Love divine, all loves excelling”, probably because John objected to line 5, “Take away the power of sinning”⁸⁰ (see above, page 180).

Ironically, by about 1759 Charles was warning others about “the flood of Catharism which has now overflowed us; and the sect of ranters that should arise out of the perfect witnesses”.⁸¹ Not surprisingly, John for his part indicated his disapproval of certain lines by Charles in *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* (1762):

‘Tis not a sudden stroke of grace
Destroys at once the cursed race,
When first to Christ we come;
But by *degrees insensible*
The Lord shall all our sins expel,
And utterly consume.*⁸²

And in one of those marginal notes which John so often wrote against his brother’s hymns, he indicated that the onset of grace was not “by degrees insensible”, but * *Both suddenly and gradually. JW.*

In the following year the Welsh Calvinist Methodist, Howell Harris,⁸³ wrote:

9 March 1763. To Mr Charles Wesley. [He] is disunited from his brother on account of this Perfection, and willing to go about with me to see this work of God everywhere.

18 April 1763. To Mr Charles Wesley, where I find a breach between him and his brother offering about the Moravians and Perfection.

20 July 1763. ...I told [John] that he had reduced Perfection very low. I had much freedom with Mr Charles _____, who comes more, I think, to the great matter of setting our Saviour all out, and having Him before us continually. Would have his brother recant for having differed with all others about Sinless Perfection.

Some years later, Charles preached on "Poverty of spirit". We are told that "Such a feeling of humility fell over the bands as has not been felt for many months or even years - 'every mouth was stopt; no one boasting word of perfection'". One of Thomas Maxfield's followers, after hearing him preach, cried out that "This poverty of spirit will destroy all OUR perfection", while another was convinced of the error of her former belief.⁸⁴

For Charles, therefore, sanctification was quite clearly not something which followed only weeks, still less days, after justification; it could at best be a gradual and lifelong process. To expect it beforehand was a delusion to the believer and a stumbling-block to the outsider. "Believe delusion's ranting sons, and all the work is done at once!" he scoffed.⁸⁵ That someone should claim Perfection in this life was the surest sign of sinfulness and pride. He wrote:

Though all the precious promises
I find fulfilled in Jesu's love,
If perfect I myself profess,
My own profession I disprove:
The purest saint who lives below
Doth his own sanctity disclaim,
The wisest owns I nothing know,
The holiest cries, I nothing am.⁸⁶

He will not speak a greater word:
The aged follower of his Lord,
Ready for Jesus' sake to die,
Declares, "The chief of sinners, I!"
But now we hear a youngling say,
"Pardoned, and perfect in a day,
The instantaneous witness see,
The chief of saints admire in me!"⁸⁷

1. Perfect if I were indeed,
My own state I would not know,
Would not innocence plead,
Though my soul were white as snow;
Would not in myself delight,
Nothing still in my own sight.
2. Still, whene'er in love renewed
I retain my poverty,
Glory in my pardoning God:
What I am, I am to thee;
Small and vile in thine own eyes,
Lord, I still my life despise.
3. All my life of grace is thine,
All my faith is but a grain;
All my goodness is Divine,
Flowing to its source again,
Mingled with the crystal sea,
Lost in thine immensity.⁸⁸

Notice Charles's mysticism in the above examples: "Resorbed into perfection's sea", and "Mingled with the crystal sea, /Lost in thine immensity", which remind us of the more famous lines "Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea, /And lost in thine immensity".⁸⁹

It should be added that Charles did not, in fact, refer in his hymns "Preparation for Death" (1772) to Perfection as something to be routinely expected on the deathbed. Rather, his emphasis is on penitence and pardon. In the meantime, we need to be patient:

After we have endured a while,
The Lord rewards our patient toil,
Establishes our hearts with grace,
And perfects us in holiness;

But if impatiently we rise*
To offer *sinless sacrifice*,
The power we shall not long maintain,
Or kings without our Saviour reign.⁹⁰

* How? JW.

It would be quite wrong to issue an ultimatum to God on such an issue:

4. Yet till thy time is fully come,
I dare not hastily presume*
To snatch the perfect grace,...⁹¹

* I dare say "Now is the appointed time". JW.

4. I set my God a time no more,...*⁹²

* I do, if I put him off. JW.

Clearly, the interests of the two brothers had led to a conflict of views. This disagreement was probably quite open by 1763, when the Welsh Calvinist Methodist, Howell Harris, referred to it (page 185 above).

In a letter to Charles dated 27 January 1767,⁹³ John summed up the issues between them, including this point:

I was thinking on Christian Perfection, with regard to the thing, the manner, and the time.

1. By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbour, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.

I do not include an impossibility of falling from it, either in part or in whole. Therefore, I retract several expressions in our hymns, which partly express, partly imply, such an impossibility.

And I do not contend for the term *sinless*, though I do not object against it.

Do we agree or differ here? If we differ, wherein?

2. As to the manner. I believe this is always wrought in the soul by faith, by a simple act of faith, consequently in an instant. But I believe in a gradual work both preceding and following that instant.

Do we agree or differ here?

As to the time. I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before death.

Do we agree or differ here?...

4. I believe it is usually many years after justification, but that it *may be* within five years or five months after it. I know no conclusive argument to the contrary. Do you? If it *must be* many years after justification, I would be glad to know how many. *Pretium quotus arrogat annus?* [What year must claim the reward?]. And how many days or months or even years can you allow to be between perfection and death? How far from justification *must* it be? And how near to death?

If it be possible, let you and I come to a good understanding, both for our own sakes and for the sake of the people.

John followed up this letter on 12 February 1767:

...The voice of one who truly loves God surely is -
'Tis worse than death my God to love
And not my God alone.

Such a one is certainly "as much athirst for *sanctification* as he once was for justification." You remember this used to be one of your constant questions. It is not now. Therefore *you* are altered in your sentiments. And, unless we come to an explanation, we shall inevitably contradict each other. But this ought not to be in any wise, if it can possibly be avoided.

I still think to disbelieve *all professors* amounts to a *denial of the thing*. For if there be *no living witness* of what we have preached for twenty years, I cannot, dare not preach it any longer. The whole comes to one point, - is there or is there not any instantaneous sanctification between justification and death? I say, Yes; you (*often seem to*) say, No. What arguments brought you to think so? Perhaps they may convince me too. Nay, there is one question more, if you allow there is such a thing, - Can one who has attained it fall? Formerly I thought not; but you (with T. Walsh and Jo. Jones) convinced me of my mistake...

It is true that John wrote in 1767:

...It appears, beyond all possibility of exception, that to this day my brother and I maintained - (1) That Christian perfection is that love of God and our neighbour which implies deliverance from *all sin*; (2) that this is received merely *by faith*; (3) that it is given *instantaneously*, in one moment; (4) that we are to expect it, not at death, but *every moment*; that *now* is the appointed time, *now* is the day of salvation.⁹⁴

However, it seems to me that John was glossing over differences between himself and Charles. Similarly, I do not think we should take at its face value a letter which John wrote to Charles in 1766:

Oh, insist everywhere on *full* redemption, receivable now by *faith alone!* consequently to be looked for *now*. You are *made*, as it were, for this very thing. Just here you are in your element. In connection I beat you; but in strong, pointed *sentences*, you beat me. Go on, in your *own way*, what God has peculiarly called you to. Press the *instantaneous* blessing. Then I shall have more time for my peculiar calling, enforcing the *gradual* work.⁹⁵

John can only have been trying to get him to preach the instantaneous work - at which Charles would no doubt have shone - because it was increasingly attractive for pastoral reasons. Flattery, however, would get him nowhere: Charles had set his mind against instant sanctification.

In retrospect we are likely to conclude that John had hung an albatross round the neck of Methodism by using this word "Perfection". Perfection implies a finished state,

something from which there can be no further advance. No amount of qualifications could prevent misunderstandings and consequent criticism. And the more qualifications he inserted, the less logical the whole concept became. How could his limited definition correspond to "the mind of Christ", or "partaking of the divine nature"? If he had labelled the objective of his societies "Holiness", which does not imply a finished state, there would no doubt still have been accusations of failure to live up to pretensions, but no failure of logic. Interestingly, when John visited Haworth in July 1761, William Grimshaw urged him to replace "sinless perfection" by some other term "sufficiently expressive of true Christian holiness".⁹⁶

The question now arises whether Charles Wesley's doctrine of Perfection is in any way linked with that of the atonement. It does not have to be: some theologies draw a sharp dividing line between justification (effected by the atonement) and sanctification (effected by communion with Christ and his Holy Spirit). On the other hand, the atonement itself may be seen, not simply as reconciliation, but as the uniting of the divine with the human nature. On that basis its work is not complete until the union is secured: atonement necessarily involves sanctification.

Charles certainly believed in that act of uniting; he wrote:

My God! I know, I feel thee mine,
And will not quit my claim,
Till all I have is lost in thine
And all renewed I am.⁹⁷

and:

Fill me with all the life of love:
In mystic union join
Me to thyself, and let me prove
The fellowship divine.⁹⁸

and again:

Eager for thee I ask and pant:
So strong, the principle divine
Carries me out with sweet constraint
Till all my hallowed soul is thine,
Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in thine immensity.⁹⁹

The hymn "Saviour from sin"¹⁰⁰ is helpful here, and I quote the full version, from which our modern books omit verses 3 and 4, and the 1780 version verse 4:

1. Saviour from sin, I wait to prove
That Jesus is thy healing name;
To lose, when perfected in love,
Whate'er I have, or can, or am.

- I stay me on thy faithful word:
The servant shall be as his Lord.
2. Answer that gracious end in me
For which thy precious life was given;
Redeem from all iniquity;
Restore, and make me meet for heaven:
Unless thou purge my every stain,
Thy suffering and my faith are vain.
 3. 'Tis not a bare release from sin,
Its guilt and pain, my soul requires;
I want a Spirit of power within;
Thee, Jesus, thee my heart desires,
And pants, and breaks to be renewed,
And washed in thine all-cleansing blood.
 4. Didst thou not in the flesh appear
Sin to condemn, and man to save?
That perfect love might cast out fear?
That I thy mind in me might have?
In holiness show forth thy praise,
And serve thee all my spotless days?
 5. Didst thou not die that I might live
No longer to myself, but thee,
Might body, soul, and spirit give
To him who gave himself for me?
Come then, my Master and my God,
Take the dear purchase of thy blood.
 6. Thine own peculiar [now "devoted"] servant claim
For thine own truth and mercy's sake;
Hallow in me thy glorious name;
Me for thine own this moment take,
And change, and thoroughly purify;
Thine only may I live and die.¹⁰¹

The language of Perfection is plainly here: he speaks of being "perfected in love"; of Christ purging "every stain"; of "perfect love" casting out fear; of holiness; of being "thoroughly purified". But at the same time there is the language of atonement. "Unless thou purge my every stain" may well have in mind:

Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged (Isaiah 6:7, KJV),
and:

When he had by himself purged our sins (Hebrews 1:3, KJV).

A reference to Christ's suffering follows. "Didst thou not in the flesh appear/ Sin to condemn and man to save" refers to Romans 8:3, "God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (KJV). "Didst thou not die..." he asks, and refers to himself as "the dear purchase of thy blood".

Very similar language, more succinctly expressed, occurs in a hymn on Matthew 11:28, "O that my load of sin were gone":

14. Answer thy death's design in me;
The guilt and power of sin remove,
Redeem from all iniquity,
Renew, and perfect me in love.¹⁰²

One of the strongest expressions of his belief in Perfection is to be found in his hymn "God of all power, and truth, and grace" (*Hymns & Psalms* 726; *H&SP* 1742). As written, this consisted of 28 verses, and the hymn was printed in full, under the heading "The Promise of Sanctification" at the end of John's sermon on Christian Perfection .¹⁰³ It was based on Ezekiel 36:25ff:

25Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them.

I have given the full text of the hymn as Appendix A2, but the following verses are particularly relevant. (Those omitted from *Hymns & Psalms* are distinguished by an asterisk).

3. That I thy mercy may proclaim,
That all mankind thy truth may see,
Hallow thy great and glorious name,
And perfect holiness in me.
6. Thy sanctifying Spirit pour,
To quench my thirst and wash me clean:
Now, Father, let the gracious shower
Descend, and make me pure from sin.
- * 7. Purge me from every sinful blot;
My idols all be cast aside;
Cleanse me from every evil thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.
8. Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free;
The mind that was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to thee.
- * 17. Wash out my old original stain;
Tell me no more it cannot be,
Demons or men! The Lamb was slain,
His blood was all poured out for me!
- * 18. Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my heart:
One drop of thy all-cleansing blood
Shall make my sinfulness depart,
And fill me with the life of God.
28. Now let me gain perfection's height!
Now let me into nothing fall!
Be less than nothing in thy sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all!

Notice the references to the blood of Christ in verses 17 and 18. In similar vein he writes:

Thy blood shall wash us white as snow,
Present us sanctified to God,
And perfected in love below.¹⁰⁴

There is, then, a clear link in his hymns between Perfection and the atonement; but is it a causal link? We are familiar with the line in Mrs C F Alexander's hymn "There is a green hill far away",

He died to make us good.

But her statement is a vague one as it stands. Can we find anything more concrete in Charles Wesley's hymns, any way in which the atonement in itself leads to Perfection? Could we say, for instance, that the main importance of the atonement is that it *does* lead to Perfection?

We have so far considered what the Wesleys meant by Perfection, and seen that there were differences between the two brothers. John thought that it was possible in this life, and that it could be instantaneous; Charles, with his more mystical view, came in time to see it as a gradual process by which we became filled with the love of God, but a process which could never be complete in this life. We now have to consider how he believed that process to take place.

There were four main routes, it seems to me, by which Charles considered that we might be sanctified. The first of these was a disciplined life; the second was suffering; the third was identification with Christ in his death; and the fourth was the blood of Christ. Of these, the first two are not directly related to the atonement, but the remainder are. It will be convenient to touch upon the first three briefly in this chapter, and to deal with the blood of Christ at length below; identification with him in his death has already been covered in Chapter 2.3 (Jesus as Representative) and 5.3 (Experiencing the Cross in the Present). I shall also be clarifying the relationship between the blood of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

The value of a disciplined life

Both Wesleys believed that the Christian needed disciplines such as attending divine worship (including, especially, Holy Communion), being in fellowship with other

Christians, private prayer and Bible study, and fasting twice a week. This had been a feature of their life at Oxford (hence, of course, the term "Methodist"), and there is no indication that their profound experiences in May 1738 had caused any reaction against it. Indeed, as we have seen in Chapter 5, John wrote to Charles in 1772:

I often cry out, "*vitae me rede priori*". Let me be again an Oxford Methodist. I am often in doubt whether it would be best for me to resume all my Oxford rules, great and small. I did then walk closely with God, and redeemed the time. But what have I been doing these thirty years?¹⁰⁵

John appears to have laid a good deal more stress on discipline than did his brother, who as I have outlined looked additionally to the mystical experience of participating in the death of Christ. Perfection, said John, was to be attained by those who applied themselves

as oft as they have opportunity.. to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him; to search the Scriptures; by fasting, as well as temperance, to keep their bodies under...subjection; and above all to pour out their souls in prayer, both secretly, and in the great congregation.¹⁰⁶

Hence Rattenbury's observation that "Entire sanctification, Wesley teaches, is by faith, but also by rising at four o'clock in the morning and by fasting".¹⁰⁷ Wesley, as just noted, called his followers to the duty of constant communion: it is reckoned that in the year 1740-41 he received the Sacrament 98 times and 40 years later did so 91 times.¹⁰⁸ Members of the Holy Club had communicated weekly and aroused antagonism by so doing, though defended by William Law¹⁰⁹ as acting strictly in accordance with the canons of the Church.¹¹⁰ This was certainly a cause for dissension with the Moravians, for on Easter Day 1740 Charles had pointedly gone to church, for which he was threatened with expulsion from the Fetter Lane Society;¹¹¹ the Moravians accused him of "preaching up the ordinances", "whereas believers are not subject to ordinances".¹¹²

The Wesleys did not, however, look upon the Sacrament as a mere duty (or even a privilege for those in good standing): it was a channel for divine grace,¹¹³ and could be termed a "converting ordinance". John mentions it specifically in connection with Perfection:

As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls: this gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection.¹¹⁴

The following entries from his Journal illustrate the reasons for this attitude:

Mon. Sept. 3 [1739]. I talked largely with my mother, who told me, that till a short time since, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned, as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit; much less did she imagine, that this was the common

privilege of all true believers. "Therefore, (said she,) I never durst ask it for myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee;' the words struck through my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven me all my sins."¹¹⁵

Thur. 20 [Sept 1739]. Mrs. C---, being in deep heaviness, had desired me to meet her this afternoon. She had long earnestly desired to receive the Holy Communion, having an unaccountably strong persuasion, "That God would manifest himself to her therein, and give rest to her soul." But her heaviness being now greatly increased, Mr. D---e gave her that fatal advice, "Not to communicate until she had living faith." This still added to her perplexity; yet at length she resolved to obey God rather than man; and "He was made known unto her in breaking of bread." In that moment she felt her load removed, she knew she was accepted in the Beloved, and all the time I was expounding at Mr. B---'s, was full of that peace which cannot be uttered.¹¹⁶

Sun. 13 [November 1763]. I found much of the power of God in preaching, but far more at the Lord's table.

Mon. 30 [April 1750]. About one I administered the Lord's Supper to a sick person, with a few of our Brethren and Sisters. Being straitened for time, I used no extempore prayer at all; yet the power of God was so unusually present during the whole time, that several knew not how to contain themselves, being quite overwhelmed with joy and love.

Charles, like his brother, stresses the duty, but also the joys, of Holy Communion, and its use as a channel of grace, in his hymn "Jesus, we thus obey":¹¹⁷

1. Jesus, we thus obey
Thy last and kindest word;
Here, in thine own appointed way,
We come to meet thee, Lord.
3. His presence makes the feast;
And now our spirits feel
The glory not to be expressed,
The joy unspeakable.
6. Whate'er the Almighty can
To pardoned sinners give,
The fullness of our God made man
We here with Christ receive.

The value of suffering

The second main route by which Charles (who experienced various illnesses for much of his life) believed that we might be sanctified was suffering. This however brought him into conflict with his brother, who prided himself on his health ¹¹⁸ and the way in which he was often delivered from illness in answer to prayer. In the hymn below, John wrote "NO!" three times on the manuscript :

1. The children every one partake
The chastisement for all designed,
Their God doth no exception make
Impartially, severely kind,
No favourite uncorrected leaves,
But scourges all whom he receives.

2. To none of the believing race
 This mark the Father's love denies;
 But when he sees the light of grace
 The babe in Christ that moment cries, *NO!*
 And of the heavenly Spirit born
 Begins at once to breathe, and mourn.
3. In sorrow, as in grace, we grow,
 With closer fellowship in pain,
 Our Lord more intimately know,
 Till coming to a perfect man
 His sharpest agonies we share, *NO!*
 And all his marks of passion bear.
4. Partakers of his bitterest cup,
 And burdened with his heaviest load,
 We fill his after-sufferings up,
 Conformed to an expiring God;
 And only such our Father owns, *NO!*
 And seats on our appointed thrones.¹¹⁹

Identification with Christ in his death

The last hymn quoted can already be said to identify us, in our suffering, with Christ's suffering. But Charles went further than this. It was our calling to identify ourselves at all times with Christ's sufferings, irrespective of whether we were ill, or being persecuted. Most of the Church's teaching about the death of Christ, at least since Anselm, has been substitutionary in nature: Christ died instead of us; he died for our sins, the godly for the ungodly. But there is another strand of apostolic teaching which has received less attention, the idea of Christ as representative (see Chapter 2.3 above). So Paul can say, "I have been crucified with Christ". Charles Wesley certainly wrote many hymns on the theme of substitution, but he also wrote many on that of representation. The Christian is *in* Christ: we are part of his mystical body; we feel his pains. And of course the appeal of the great Isaac Watts hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross", is in this representative aspect. Many of Charles's hymns (especially those on the Lord's Supper) would appeal to those accustomed to Ignatian meditation: we are asked to view the cross, to see the blood, to hear the Saviour's dying groans. Many Methodists did in fact have vivid experiences along these lines.

We do not sing many hymns nowadays about sharing in Christ's sufferings, though these words are familiar enough :

Soar we now where Christ hath led,
 Following our exalted Head;
 Made like him, like him we rise;
 Ours the cross, the grave, the skies:¹²⁰

In stronger language he can identify his own willingness to suffer with that of Christ. Christ offered himself as a sacrifice, and the believer should do no less:

...O were I offered up
Upon thy sacrifice!
Who would not drink the sacred cup,
And die when Jesus dies!
Thou seest my heart's desire,
I would thy cross partake;
I long to be baptized with fire
And die for thy dear sake;
I long to rise with thee,
And soar to things above,
And spend a blest eternity
In praise of dying love.¹²¹

In such hymns he is echoing St Paul's words in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me"; and in Philippians 2:5, "your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God...made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant". This is a call to a radical conversion of spirit, a setting aside of the world's values and the acceptance of God's wisdom revealed in the cross of Christ.

The blood of Christ

Perfection is to be secured, finally, by the blood of Christ. There is a great deal in the hymns to show that Charles saw the blood of Christ as having the power to make us holy. In "The blood of goats and bullocks slain"¹²² he writes:

And shall not that atoning blood
Of Christ, the everlasting God,
Make the polluted conscience clean,
And purge our inmost soul from sin,
And sanctify our sprinkled heart?

This hymn is based on Hebrews 9:13-14:

¹³For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

¹⁴How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works ["acts that lead to death" - NIV] to serve the living God? [KJV].

Similarly, the word "sprinkle" occurs in his hymns, in faithfulness to such passages as Hebrews 10:22, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (KJV), and 1 Peter 1:2, "through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (KJV).

Throughout the Bible, the sprinkling of blood signifies cleansing and consecration.

And take some of the blood on the altar and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. Then he and his sons and their garments will be consecrated. [Exodus 29:21 NIV; see also Leviticus 8:30].

[Aaron] is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover... No-one is to be in the Tent of Meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most High Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel. (Leviticus 16:14, 17 NIV).

Likewise, the writer to the Hebrews says that the sprinkling of blood will sanctify those who are ceremonially unclean so that they are outwardly clean (9:13, NIV).

But again we have to ask, were the references to blood in Charles's hymns a result of experience or simply a paraphrase of scripture? Had he known such a purging himself, and if so, how did it work? Did he, for instance, believe (as, apparently, Calvin did) that there was literally no forgiveness without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22), so that blood was the *sine qua non* of forgiveness, or did he believe that the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross (for which the New Testament writers might be said to use "blood" as a shorthand term)¹²³ in some way, perhaps mysteriously, purified the believer?

On 12 May 1771 John records in his Journal:

I assisted at the funeral of Susannah Pilson. She was one of the first members of this Society, and continued firm in the hottest of the persecution. Upwards of twenty years she adorned the Gospel, steadily and uniformly walking with God. For great part of the time she was a living witness, that the blood of Christ "cleanseth from all sin".¹²⁴

Similarly, on 29 June 1782:

I went to Leeds, and after preaching, met the Select Society, consisting of about sixty members, most of whom can testify, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin".

On 29 March 1787 he records:

Several also testified, that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all sin. Two declared, after bitter cries, that they knew their sins were just then blotted out by the blood of the Lamb; and I doubt not, but it will be found, upon inquiry, that several more were either justified, or sanctified.¹²⁵

Perhaps the most complete exposition of Charles's thoughts on the way Perfection may be achieved in this life is found in the hymn "O Jesus my Hope":¹²⁶

1. O Jesus my Hope,
For me offered up,
Who with clamour pursued thee to Calvary's top,
The blood thou hast shed,
For me let it plead,
And declare thou hast died in thy murderer's stead.
2. Come then from above,
Its hardness remove,
And vanquish my heart with the sense of thy love;

Thy love on the tree
 Display unto me,
 And the servant of sin in a moment is free.

3. Neither passion nor pride
 Thy cross can abide,
 But melt in the fountain that streams from thy side;
 Let thy life-giving blood
 Remove all my load,
 And purge my foul conscience, and bring me to God.

4. Now, now let me know
 Its virtue below,
 Let it wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;
 Let it hallow my heart,
 And throughly convert,
 And make me, O Lord, in the world as thou art.

5. Each moment applied
 My weakness to hide,
 Thy blood be upon me, and always abide.
 My Advocate prove
 With the Father above,
 And speak me at last to the throne of thy love.

Here there is the belief that the blood of Christ pleads for him (verse 1), and is able to cleanse his conscience (verse 3: Hebrews 9:14 and 10:22). This does not itself lead to holiness. But Wesley also believes that Christ's love on the cross removes the hardness from his heart, freeing him from bondage to sin, and destroying passion and pride (verses 2 and 3). The blood can hallow his heart and covert him completely, making him as his Master (verse 4: John 13:14-15). I have already mentioned in Chapter 4 the idea that the blood is "applied", and have suggested that for "blood" one can also write "Christ". Wesley now (verse 5) refers to a lifelong application of the blood to his soul, and while he could be referring only to hiding or "covering" his weakness so that it is passed over, he probably also has in mind the hallowing and thorough conversion of the previous verse.

Similar sentiments are expressed in "Jesu, the strength of all that turn":¹²⁷

5. Lo! here we are, thy truth to prove,
 To witness thou art good,
 To assert thy universal love,
 And all redeeming blood.
6. Thy blood from all iniquity
 Redeems, and makes us clean;
 From pride, and wrath, it sets us free,
 From all indwelling sin.
7. The Spirit's living law it writes
 Upon our inward parts,
 Our new-born souls to God unites,
 And purifies our hearts.
8. It keeps our mind in perfect peace.
 Thy kingdom it brings in,

- Thine everlasting righteousness,
And makes an end of sin.
9. This sovereign antidote expels
The poison from our veins;
Our old congenial sickness heals,
And purges all our stains.
10. A perfect soundness it imparts,
Destroys the carnal mind,
And forms in all believing hearts
The Saviour of mankind.
11. Come, O thou Lamb,
Bring in the cleansing flood;
Apply, to wash out every stain,
Thine efficacious blood.

It is an idea not easy to grasp nowadays, because we tend to interpret “blood” literally; in that case Wesley’s ideas are mere magic or superstition.¹²⁸ But if we interpret the term symbolically, as signifying everything that Christ’s death can achieve in the believer, it makes perfect sense. We do, however, have to assume that the believer is dwelling on the death of Christ in private prayer and in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. The hymn “Lamb of God, whose bleeding love/ We thus recall to mind” was in *Hymns on the Lord’s Supper* (1745), though it is now found under “Petition and Intercession” as “Lamb of God, whose dying love/ We now recall to mind”.¹²⁹

It is not, however, the blood *instead of* the Spirit which sanctifies: just as a sinner receives the atonement through the Spirit applying the blood, so sanctification is achieved by the same agency. Wesley’s pneumatology and soteriology are very closely allied. He can write, “He sends his Spirit to purify/ Our souls from every sinful stain”, but there is no contradiction here. It is not *either* the blood *or* the Spirit, but both together. Thus:

Saviour, I long to testify
The fulness of thy saving grace;
O might thy Spirit the blood apply,
Which bought for me the sacred peace!¹³⁰

Come, Holy Ghost, all quickening fire!
Come, and my hallowed heart inspire,
Sprinkled with the atoning blood.¹³¹

Send us the Spirit of thy Son,
To make the depths of Godhead known,
To make us share the life divine;
Send him the sprinkled blood to apply,
Send him our souls to sanctify,
And show and seal us ever thine.¹³²

Still the Holy Ghost descends
The indwelling Comforter,

All the griefs and troubles ends
Of those that Christ revere;
Works his miracles within,
Renews their hearts, and tongues, and eyes;
Makes an utter end of sin
And wholly sanctifies.¹³³

...God vouchsafes to dwell
With all the chosen seed;
In the hearts of men to abide
When thoroughly cleansed by Jesu's blood,
By the Spirit sanctified
And all resigned to God.¹³⁴

Equally, it is true to say that the blood is applied *by faith*::

Father, we give thee all the praise,
Thy mercy, love, and causeless grace,
The Source of our salvation own;
But that which Jesu's blood applies,
Absolves, and wholly sanctifies,
Is faith, almighty faith alone...¹³⁵

- but then, the Spirit is a Spirit of faith:

God of grace, vouchsafe to me
That Spirit of holiness,
Sighs my heart for purity,
And pants for perfect peace;
Spirit of faith, the blood apply,
Which only can my filth remove,
Fill my soul, and sanctify
By Jesu's heavenly love.¹³⁶

To this extent, therefore, John R Tyson is right in saying that "Charles's doctrine of sanctification was not based on the third person of the Trinity";¹³⁷ and in adding that there is a strong connection between his pneumatology and his soteriology, in contrast to the revivalist tendency to emphasise the Spirit at the expense of the cross.¹³⁸

One of the last hymns written by Charles¹³⁹ shows how dear the hope of perfection remained to him, and is a fitting conclusion to this Chapter. The longing for holiness remains, and this holiness is the replacement of his will by his Lord's, the changing of his humanity into the divine nature. But, in Wesley's mature and considered theology, the quest for holiness is a matter for constant prayer, not for an experience of instantaneous sanctification, and can be fully satisfied only when he departs this life.

Take away all iniquity, and give good, Hosea iv.2

1. How long, how often shall I pray
Take all iniquity away,
And give the plenitude of good,

The blessing wrought by Jesu's blood,
Concupiscence and pride remove,
And fill me, Lord, with humble love.

2. Again I take the words to me
Prescribed, and offer them to thee
Thy kingdom come to root out sin,
And perfect holiness bring in,
And swallow up my will in thine,
And human change into divine.
3. So shall I render thee thine own,
And tell the wonders thou hast done,
The power and faithfulness declare
Of God, who hears and answers prayer,
Extol the riches of thy grace,
And spend my latest breath in praise.
4. O that the joyful hour was come
Which calls thy ready servant home,
Unites me to the church above
Where angels chaunt the song of love,
And saints eternally proclaim
The glories of the heavenly Lamb!

Notes to Chapter 6

- 1 *H&P 747 (H&SP 1742).*
- 2 "John Wesley's Doctrine of Justification" i *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Fall 1983. Brockwell refers to Sermon XXIX, Sermon on the Mount IX 21, and presumably has in mind Wesley's description of God's righteousness "as being both his own free gift through Christ, and his own work through his almighty Spirit." But I do not think these stand in contrast to each other as being in the former case imputed and in the latter case imparted.
- 3 Letter dated 15 September 1790 (*Letters*, Volume 8 p 238).
- 4 See Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification*, Epworth 1950, p 103 note 6.
- 5 *John Wesley's Journal* 2 September 1762 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:529).
- 6 *John Wesley's Journal* 30 September 1765 (Standard Edition, Vol 5:149).
- 7 *John Wesley's Journal* 16 February 1760 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:365).
- 8 *H&P 740(2) (H&SP 1740).*
- 9 Henry D Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, Epworth Press, London, 1989, p 396.
- 10 *John Wesley's Journal* 13 September 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:274f).
- 11 Henry D Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, Epworth Press, London, 1989, p 395-6.
- 12 *John Wesley's Journal*, 8 September 1765 (Standard Edition, Vol 5:143).
- 13 Letter to Charles, 27 January 1767 (*John Wesley's Letters*, Volume 5, pp 38-39).
- 14 *John Wesley's Journal*, 6 March 1760 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:367ff) .
- 15 *John Wesley's Journal*, 8 September 1765 (Standard Edition, Vol 5:143). It has to be said that all was not sweetness and light in the Methodist societies: many had their "jars" or quarrellings, even when the members did not fall away.
- 16 *John Wesley's Journal* 28 October 1762 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:532).
- 17 Question to Methodist Conference, 1765:
 - Q. Have they left off snuff?
 - A. No. Many are absolutely enslaved to it still. In order to redress this great evil,
 1. Speak to any one who takes it at sermon-time.
 2. Let no Preacher touch it on any account.
 3. Shew the Societies the evil of it.
- 18 *John Wesley's Journal*, 25 July 1753 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:76): "I found an accursed thing about them [the Society at St Ives, Cornwall]; well nigh one and all, bought or sold uncustomed goods. I therefore delayed speaking to any more, till I had met them altogether. This I did in the evening, and told them plain, either they must put this abomination away, or they would see my face no more."
- 19 Letter to Mrs Maitland, 12 May 1763.
- 20 *John Wesley's Journal*, 27 August 1768 (Standard Edition, Vol 5:284).
- 21 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 7 (1784), p 276.
- 22 Letter to Mrs Pendarves dated 19 June 1731. Wesley did not alter his views on this.
- 23 *John Wesley's Works* Volume 5, pp 227-228; quoted by Tyson, *Charles Wesley: A Reader*, OUP 1989, p 372.
- 24 New International Version.
- 25 *John Wesley's Works*, Vol 14 p 328.
- 26 *John Wesley's Works* Volume 6 p 19; see also *Works*, Volume 7 p 19.
- 27 1 John 1:8-10, New International Version.
- 28 H R Mackintosh, *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, p 54.
- 29 William Temple, *Christian Faith and Life*, Mowbray, London, 1994, p 61.
- 30 *H&P 726 (H&SP 1742).*
- 31 *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Epworth Press, London, 1952, pp 33-37.
- 32 *H&P 693(5)(6); H&SP 1742).*
- 33 *H&P 723*, which omits verses 4 and 5, and begins "All things are possible to them" (*H&SP 1749).*
- 34 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.1.17.
- 35 *Letters of John Pawson*, ed. Bowmer and Vickers, Volume I, p 38.
- 36 Toplady, *Hymns of Thanksgiving* V..
- 37 Toplady, *Hymns*, Appendix XIII.
- 38 *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett, Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1988, p 180, on no. 604.
- 39 *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Epworth Press, London, 1952, p 15.

- 40 *John Wesley's Journal*, 16 May 1741 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:456ff).
- 41 *John Wesley's Journal*, 2 May 1741 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:451f).
- 42 *John Wesley's Journal*, 3 September 1741 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:487ff). The conversation was in Latin and editors seem to have followed Wesley's wishes in leaving it untranslated. I have used the translation in "*The Limits of Love Divine*"; by W Stephen Gunter, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1989, p 102. Lindström, another translator, who states that Charles was also present, cautions that Zinzendorf's statements are "polemically sharpened", but the gist is probably accurate enough.
- 43 *H&P* 735 (*SH* 1762).
- 44 Bell had written to Wesley in 1761: "I knew that he had saved me from all sin, and left none remaining in me. I felt, he had given me a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within me. I now truly ceased from my own works. I felt no more self-will no anger, no pride: nothing in my soul but pure love alone". When Wesley reprinted this in *The Arminian Magazine* for 1780, he added, "Such was George Bell! What is he now?"
- 45 *John Wesley's Letters*, Vol. 5:38.
- 46 See the *Journal* for that date.
- 47 Henry D Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, Epworth Press, London, 1989, p 339.
- 48 *H&P* 723 (*H&SP* 1749; now "All things are possible to them").
- 49 *PW* Volume 5, p 310 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 50 "Therefore, I retract several expressions in our hymns, which partly express, partly imply, such an impossibility [ie that we could sin]".
- 51 St Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII, 30.
- 52 *H&P* 282 (*H&SP* 1739), "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire", verse 3.
- 53 *PW* Volume 13, p 97, No. 3220 (*SH* 1762).
- 54 *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1767), Epworth Press, London, 1952, p 112.
- 55 *Letters of John Wesley*, Volume 3, p 221.
- 56 William Briggs was an early Book Steward and, probably, preacher; he married Miss Perronet, daughter of the Vicar of Shoreham, in 1749.
- 57 Catalogue of the Early Preachers' Collection in John Rylands Library, 1/11.
- 58 *Letters*, Volume 3, p 221.
- 59 William Green (b.1739) was a schoolmaster at Rotherham and an itinerant Methodist preacher.
- 60 *PW* Volume 1, p 277, verse 11, on Micah 6:6 (*H&SP* 1740).
- 61 From "Open, Lord, my inward ear", now *H&P* 540(4) (first published 1742).
- 62 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 4, pp 253-254.
- 63 *The Arminian Magazine*, Volume 4, p 255.
- 64 *John Wesley's Letters*, Volume 5, p 185.
- 65 *H&P* 540(4) (*H&SP* 1742), "Open, Lord, my inward ear".
- 66 *Journal*, 4 August 1762 (Standard Edition, Vol 4:523).
- 67 *H&P* 706(2) (*H&SP* 1739), "Where shall my wandering soul begin" (often referred to as "The Wesleys' Conversion Hymn", though there is dispute whether the title should be given to this, to "And can it be", or to "Granted is the Saviour's prayer"; see articles in *PWHS* XXXV.161 by Peter W Grant and XXXVI.43 by Neil Dixon). The modern editors of the 1780 Collection have observed that these words ("should know, should feel") are "the keynote of Wesley's 'experimental divinity', of 'knowing' in the Johannine sense". (Hillebrandt and Beckerlegge, quoted in *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett, Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1988, p 180).
- 68 Sermon on Scripture Way of Salvation, *Works*, Vol 2, p 158.
- 69 *Ib*, p 159.
- 70 Mrs Penelope Maitland was sister to Martin Madan, the hymn-writer, and wife of General Maitland.
- 71 Letter 12 May 1763 (*Letters*, Volume 4, pp 212-213).
- 72 *John Wesley's Journal*, 2 December 1744.
- 73 Sermon on Scripture Way of Salvation, *Works*, Vol 2, p 168.
- 74 *Letters of John Wesley* Volume 5, p 20.
- 75 *The Arminian Magazine*, Vol 1 (1778), pp 529-530.
- 76 *John Wesley's Journal*, 24 May 1738 (Standard Edition, Vol 1:472).
- 77 *PW* Volume 5, p 310 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 78 *PW* Volume 10, p 127 (*SH* 1762).

79 PW Volume 1, p 370, "Lord, I believe a rest remains" (first published 1740), and editor's
 footnote.

80 *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett, Methodist Publishing
 House, Peterborough, 1988, p 180.

81 Transcript of letter dated 1 February 1763 from Charles to Joseph Cownley. It was "four years
 ago" that Charles began to warn others about these tendencies. A Cathar (or Catharan) was one
 who professed superior purity.

82 PW Volume 9, no.305 (SH 1762, on Deuteronomy 7:22).

83 Howell Harris (1714-1773) was the founder of Welsh Calvinist Methodism.

84 See Unpublished Letters of Charles Wesley, Volume 2, reference 7/31. The date is c. 1772.

85 PW Volume 13, p 133, no.3280 (SH 1762, on Hebrews 6:1).

86 PW Volume 9, p 238 (SH 1762).

87 UPCW Volume 2, p 469 (on 1 Timothy 1:15), ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood
 Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1992.

88 PW, Volume 9, no.742 (SH 1762, on Job 9:21).

89 H&P 282, "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire" (H&SP 1739); verse 3 PW Volume 13, p
 132, no.3279, on Hebrews 6:1.

90 PW Volume 9, p 158.

91 PW, Volume 9, p 396 (SH 1762 on Isaiah 30:18).

92 PW, Volume 9, p 396, no.1108 (SH 1762 on Isaiah 28:16).

93 *John Wesley's Letters*, Volume 5, pp 38-39.

94 *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Epworth Press, London, 1952, p 41.

95 *John Wesley's Letters*, Volume V, p 16.

96 *William Grimshaw* by Frank Baker, Epworth Press, London, 1963, p 74.

97 H&P 740 (H&SP 1740).

98 PW Volume 1 p 225 (H&SP 1740).

99 H&P 282(3) (H&SP 1739), "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire".

100 *Hymns & Psalms* 747 (H&SP 1742)

101 PW, Volume 2, p 126 (H&SP 1742).

102 PW, Volume 2, p 144 (H&SP 1742).

103 *John Wesley's Sermons*, (Works, Outlier Edition, Vol 2 at p 122).

104 PW, Volume 4, p 340 (H&SP 1749).

105 *Letters*, Volume 6, p 6.

106 Quoted by J R Tyson in *Charles Wesley on Sanctification*, Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids,
 1986, p 231.

107 J E Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, Epworth Press, London,
 1941, p 305.

108 *In Church*, Methodist Local Preachers' Office, 1971, p 51.

109 See Chapter 2, page 66.

110 John S Simon, *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*, Epworth 1921, pp 91f and 97.

111 Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England 1728-1760*, Oxford Historical Monographs,
 Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, p 67.

112 *John Wesley's Journal*, 23 April 1740.

113 "For God hath in Scripture ordained prayer, reading or hearing, and the receiving of the Lord's
 Supper, as the ordinary means of conveying his grace to man." *John Wesley's Journal*, Wed 25
 June 1740.

114 John Wesley's Works, 7:148.

115 *John Wesley's Journal*, 3 September 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:267)

116 *John Wesley's Journal*, 20 September 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:279)

117 *Hymns & Psalms* 614 (HoLS 1745).

118 On 28 June 1786, John wrote in his Journal: "I entered into the eighty-third year of my age. I
 am a wonder to myself. It is now twelve years since I have felt any such sensation as weariness.
 I am never tired, (such is the goodness of God!) either with writing, preaching or travelling; one
 natural cause undoubtedly is, my continual exercise and change of air". Ten years earlier he had
 written, "I am seventy-three years old, and far abler to preach than I was at three-and -twenty.
 What natural means has God used, to produce so wonderful an effect? 1. Continual exercise and
 change of air, by travelling above four thousand miles in a year. 2. Constant rising at four. 3.
 The ability, if ever I want, to sleep, immediately. 4. The never losing a night's sleep in my
 life...". (Standard Edition, Vol 7:174f).

- 119 PW Volume 13, p 157, no.3321 (SH 1762).
 120 H&P 193(4) (H&SP 1739).
 121 PW Volume 2, p 123 (H&SP 1742).
 122 PW Volume 4, p 157 (first published 1746).
 123 "A soteriological epigram for Jesus' death" - Tyson, *Charles Wesley on Sanctification*, Francis
 Asbury Press, Grand Rapids, 1986, p 128.
 124 *John Wesley's Journal*, 3 September 1739 (Standard Edition, Vol 5:411)
 125 *John Wesley's Journal*, 29 March 1787 (Standard Edition, Vol 7:254-255).
 126 PW Volume 4 p 365 (H&SP 1749).
 127 PW Volume 5 p 311 (H&SP 1749).
 128 I am however interested to see Thomas Merton on 21 December 1939 (after his conversion to
 Roman Catholicism but before his entry to Gethsemani Abbey) writing a prayer to St Thomas
 (the Apostle): "Blessed St Thomas, who are blessed because, seeing the risen Christ and handling
 His wounds you believed in Him: pray to Him that I, seeing His body and the blood of His
 wounds each day may also believe Him, and be filled with His love. And may the image of the
 five wounds go with me wherever I go; and may the blood from them purify me utterly so that
 every earthly fear, desire or temptation may be driven out of my heart, and so that I may be
 wholly filled with God's love and become His servant and the fellow citizen of the saints.
 Amen." (*Run to the Mountain: The Journals of Thomas Merton*, Volume 1, Harper Collins,
 San Francisco, 1995, p 122).
 129 H&P 550 (HoLS 1745).
 130 "What! Never speak one evil word", PW Volume 9, p 321 (SH 1762).
 131 PW Volume 1 pp 240-242 (H&SP 1739).
 132 "Father of everlasting grace", H&P 300(2) (HPT 1746).
 133 PW Volume 12, p 357-358, (SH 1762).
 134 PW Volume 12, p 216, on Acts 7:48 (SH 1762).
 135 PW Volume 13, p 71 (SH 1762).
 136 PW Volume 12, p 298, no 2690 (SH 1762).
 137 John R Tyson, *Charles Wesley and Sanctification*, Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids,
 1986, p 195.
 138 *ib*, p 206.
 139 "The following verses were written by the late Rev CHARLES WESLEY, a little before his
 Death" (*The Arminian Magazine*, vol 11 (1788), pp 446-447).

7. CHARLES WESLEY AND THE ATONEMENT: THE WIDER CONTEXT

O the blood, the precious blood,
That streams from yonder tree!
Glory to the incarnate GOD
Who suffers death for me!
Me to save from endless pain,
Me to mount above the skies,
GOD becomes a mortal man,
And bows his head, and dies.¹

We have seen almost all aspects of the Atonement reflected in Charles Wesley's hymns. We have seen the doctrines of Christ as our substitute, of Christ as our representative, of Christ as our ransom; we have seen the Cross as a victory over sin and the powers of darkness; we have seen Christ as high priest and victim, the one who makes the sacrifice and who sheds his own blood; the one who as mediator between God and humanity makes intercession for us to the Father. We have also seen specifically Wesleyan emphases: the belief that Jesus died for *all*, and therefore he died for *me*; the centrality of the Holy Spirit in his theology; the need to go on from forgiveness of sins, and justification, to sanctification; and finally the perception of the cross as occurring in the present as well as in history, so that we can still look upon Christ's sacrifice with the eye of faith.

Some of Wesley's doctrines appear, to the present-day reader, crude. It is difficult to summon any enthusiasm for his more juridical ideas, such as the punishment of Jesus by the Father,² or the pacification³ of the Father by the Son. We have noted that he even refers to *buying* God's grace.⁴ His doctrine of intercession by Jesus seems to involve the Father in granting what he would not otherwise be prepared to give.⁵ At the same time, these views are tempered by others which break away from conventional eighteenth-century theology and reach heights of intuitive thought. True it is that God demands a penalty to be paid, but through the person of Jesus the penalty is paid *by* God, not *to* God; God's just demands are always in harmony with his love.⁶ Jesus is clearly our *substitute* in his thought, but because he is also our *representative* we share his sufferings, so that they are not wholly divorced from our Christian discipleship.

How, then, should we evaluate Wesley? How does he stand, not just in relation to his eighteenth-century contemporaries (whose theology I have already referred to, or whose hymns I have quoted), but to those who have made particularly important contributions to the doctrine over the Church's history? I have chosen to compare him with the Church Fathers, with Anselm, and with Luther.⁷ How does he stand, also, in relation to modern theologians: is there any point of contact? Would they be at all stimulated by his ideas? Accordingly I have compared him additionally with a selection of modern theologians.

7.1 Wesley and the Church Fathers

The influence which the Fathers had on John and Charles Wesley has largely been neglected by Methodists who have seen May 1738 as the crucial turning-point in their lives, and dismissed what went before as a time of spiritual darkness. It has fallen to scholars like the late Albert Outler and Ted Campbell to show how important and formative was their reading of the Fathers. The work of both Outler⁸ and Campbell⁹ has concentrated on John, but bearing in mind the closeness of thought between the brothers - barring exceptions like the dispute over perfectibility - it is likely that Charles would have been influenced in the same way; and as we shall see, the outlook of the Fathers is reflected in his hymns.

In 1789 John wrote:

From a child, I was taught to love and reverence the Scriptures as the oracles of God: and, next to these, to esteem the primitive Fathers, and writers of the first three centuries.

He had first learnt about the Fathers from his own father's *Advice to a Young Clergyman*, which was written for Mr Hoole, his curate at Epworth, and subsequently passed on to John, who published it in 1735. It counselled:

Most of the Fathers [of the fourth century] are well worth reading, but especially St Athanasius, and above all, St Basil. If I were to preach in Greek, St Chrysostom would be my master.

His mother's father, Samuel Annesley, knew Gregory of Nyssa and referred to him when writing on "What it is to Love God with the Whole Heart".¹⁰

One of the members of the Holy Club, John Clayton,¹¹ "was a competent patrologist and enlisted the whole Club in the diligent study of the Fathers, from Ignatius to Athanasius".¹² (Another writer on John Wesley, John S Simon, states: "Conversation with Clayton excited Wesley's interest in the questions concerning the constitution and

practices of the Early Church. He does not seem to have paid close attention to them previously, but soon became absorbed in the study of the history of primitive Christianity").¹³ Outler believes that John acquired the following views from early and Eastern Christian spirituality:

1. The therapeutic view of the *ordo salutis* as contrasted with any forensic one;
2. The *telos* of human life in God;
3. The personal and primal agency of the Holy Spirit in Christian existence;
4. Prevenient grace;
5. The concordance of grace and free will;
6. The inspiration of Scripture and its pneumatological interpretation;
7. Salvation as the restoration of the image of God in humanity;
8. Asceticism and discipline in Christian living; and, above all,
9. The distinctions between the "moments" of justification and sanctification and, therefore, the doctrine of open-ended perfection in this life.

Such reflections, says Outler, "are more pronounced in Wesley than in any other theology of his century and they provide his theology with its most distinctive traits".¹⁴ "He was a quite conscious primitivist, convinced that the early church fathers, especially before the disastrous alliance of state and church under Constantine, were closer in time and in spiritual insight to the apostles and hence, to pure spiritual Christianity".¹⁵ It is significant that his *Christian Library* began with extracts from St Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp. It will be clear from my preceding chapters that all the nine points above can be traced in Charles's hymns as much as in John's sermons, though I shall enlarge on this shortly.

John seems to have found St Ephraem particularly helpful. In his diary entry of 19 September 1736 he is using Ephraem¹⁶ in preparation for preaching, and on 16 October of that year he refers to him as "the most awakening writer, I think, of all the ancients". He also read him "to various persons, including Delamotte",¹⁷ and to "Miss Sophy [Hopkey]",¹⁸ though he adds disappointedly, "but she got little good". That he did not reject Ephraem after 1738 is shown by his Journal entry of 4 March 1747:

I spent some hours reading "The Exhortations of Ephraem Syrus". Surely never did any man, since David, give as much of a picture of a broken and contrite heart.¹⁹

- and also by the fact that the Minutes of the first Methodist Conference recommended Ephraem to the assistants.²⁰

As I have mentioned, Outler states that John derived from early and Eastern Christian spirituality the doctrine of open-ended perfection in this life. He amplifies this later:

The crucial term for Wesley was not *perfectus* but *teleios* - a dynamic understanding of "perfecting" that had come to him from early and Eastern spirituality, such as Clement, Gregory of Nyssa, Macarius, Ephraim Syrus, et al. In this view "perfection" may be "realized" in a given moment (always as a gift from God, received by trusting faith), yet never as a finished state. "Perfection" connotes two conjoining "powers": (1) the power to love God wholeheartedly, and (2) the power not to commit sin voluntarily ("sin properly so-called", which Wesley consistently referred to as "a violation of a known law of God").²¹

The evidence that John was deeply influenced by the Church Fathers is therefore considerable. When we turn to Charles, there is much less. When John was delving into Ephraem, Charles was in Boston, never to return to Georgia. And just about that time (17 October 1736), he recorded in his own Journal:

While I was talking at Mr Chicheley's on spiritual religion, his wife observed that I seemed to have much the same way of thinking with Mr Law. Glad I was and surprised to hear that great man mentioned; and confessed, all I knew of religion was through him. I found she was well acquainted with his *Serious Call*; and has one of the two that are in New-England. I borrowed it, and passed the evening in reading it to the family...²²

However, it can hardly be true that Charles knew nothing of religion except through Law: we have noted the influence of the patrologist, John Clayton, on the Holy Club, and inferred that the advice given by his own father to John would have been given to Charles as well. We would do as well to take what he says about Law with a pinch of salt, as we do John's claim to be "a man of one book" (i.e. the Bible) - John was a prolific reader on many subjects. Geoffrey Wainwright is entirely correct in saying that "Through the Oxford and Georgia years, the contact between John and Charles was very close, and we may therefore reasonably assume that Charles became familiar with the patristic and Anglican texts by way of John, even if evidence is lacking to show that he did so directly".²³

On 21 January 1738 Charles is writing (with others) to John:

You remember the case of Athanasius *contra mundum*. The charge brought against him was worth bringing; treason, murder and adultery at once! I wonder not more is said against you: the devil himself could not wish for fitter instructions than those he actuates and inspires in Georgia.²⁴

Athanasius was one of the first of the Fathers to tackle the question *Cur Deus Homo?* Like Irenaeus, he can summarise the work of Christ by saying that he became human so that we could become divine.²⁵ He constantly uses ransom and sacrifice language, but not propitiation language.²⁶ His soteriology is essentially God-centred, and consequently

the sacrifice made by Christ was both a sacrifice made to God and one made by God.²⁷ It must also follow that the Logos by whom salvation is effected has to be of one substance with the Father.²⁸

Except for his use of propitiation language, Charles Wesley is close to Athanasius. He is also close in some respects to Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. Both of these use propitiation language quite freely, and a constant theme in their writings is the picture of Christ as High Priest and Mediator.²⁹ Nazianzus does not dwell much on the sacrificial aspect of Christ's work, though he emphasises the efficacy of his saving blood; Nyssa, on the other hand, makes particular use of the theme of sacrifice. But, as Frances Young puts it, "For both of them, as for Athanasius, the real method of removing man's sin was by the sanctification of human nature which occurred when the Logos dwelt on earth as a man".³⁰

The classic theory enshrined in Athanasius and the Gregorians, as Frances Young so rightly says, has one very great advantage over the juridical approach of the Reformers:

Instead of being limited to the riddance of one type of guilt-feeling, the salvation brought by Christ is shown to be relevant to all forms of alienation and all problems of human weakness, as well as to tremendous social evils. Another advantage is that emphasis is reserved for the saving action of God, and a division between the persons of the Godhead, Father and Son, is avoided. The sovereignty of God is preserved by the idea of self-reconciliation, the view that God himself found a method of reconciling with his goodness the fact that evil had been allowed to appear in his creation.³¹

Yet again we think of Wesley's line, "God hath quenched the wrath of God".³²

I do not think that it is necessary to go into great detail to show that Charles was at one with the early and Eastern aspects of spirituality enumerated by Outler. When we talk of a "therapeutic" (as opposed to forensic) view of the *ordo salutis* we are envisaging a salvation which bestows actual (imparted) righteousness rather than producing a mere acquittal; and Charles certainly sees a healing of our human nature and the rooting out of sin. This emerges very clearly in two hymns, both in present-day use, where the healing power of Christ is invoked for our salvation. The first of these is "Jesus, thy far-extended fame":³³

5. Wouldst thou the body's heath restore,
And not regard the sin-sick soul?
The soul thou lovest yet the more,
And surely thou shalt make it whole.

6. My soul's disease, my every sin,
To thee, O Jesus, I confess;
In pardon, Lord, my cure begin,
And perfect it in holiness.

The second is "O thou, whom once they flocked to hear":³⁴

4. Helpless howe'er my spirit lies,
And long hath languished at the pool,
A word of thine shall make me rise,
Shall speak me in a moment whole.
5. Make this my Lord's accepted hour;
Come, O my soul's physician thou!
Display thy justifying power,
And show me thy salvation now.

Randy L Maddox notes that the image of Christ as Physician, which in John Wesley is much less common than that of Christ as King, was a favourite theme of the early Christians, and is used by Charles.³⁵

For Charles, the ultimate goal is the restoration of God's image lost by Adam's sin,³⁶ and absorption into the life of God.³⁷ God's grace has sought him out; he rejoices to have found it, but it was in his power to refuse, for grace is not irresistible. The Scriptures witness to Christ, his Saviour, and are inspired by the Holy Spirit both in the writing and in our reading of them. Grace will not however take root in him unless opportunity is given to "the means of grace", namely prayer, Bible-reading, attending worship (especially the Lord's Supper), and Christian fellowship. Finally, justification is distinct from sanctification, although it would be more true to say that the latter *begins* at the same moment than that they have separate beginnings.

7.2 Wesley and Anselm

Anselm (1033-1109) had enormous influence on the doctrine of the atonement. His book *Cur Deus Homo* spelt the end of patristic thinking - which had stressed ransom and victory - and put the emphasis firmly on the need of man to pay satisfaction to God. To forgive sins, he argued, violates the moral order of the universe; whatever violates that order does not minister to God's honour; whatever does not minister to God's honour is unjust; whatever is unjust is a contradiction of God's nature. A contradiction of God's nature is something which God is not free to permit; therefore, God is not free to forgive sins.³⁸ Only an adequate recompense to God's honour will suffice, and since man was

incapable of providing such satisfaction, he was doomed unless someone else could do so on his behalf. Christ, by his perfect act of obedience, outweighed all our sin and thus secured our redemption.

Anselm has been much criticised in this century, though not always fairly. It would be wrong to lay the blame for the doctrine of penal substitution at his door, because Anselm himself did not regard the atonement as the punishment of Christ by God: rather, it was the means by which punishment could be avoided. Indeed, Harnack and Denney criticise him for not seeing the atonement as penal in character. As McIntyre puts it,

The punishment which St Anselm envisages for sin...is the annihilation of the sinner (*mors aeterna*) or, at least, the eternal torments of hell. With that extreme notion of punishment in his mind, it is not surprising that there can be no substitutionary punishment. What, therefore, St Anselm presents is the alternative method by which God deals with the great fact of human sin, namely, satisfaction.³⁹

However, as time went by the penal aspect of satisfaction came to be more and more stressed, and the atonement to be viewed in terms of criminal law.

Another criticism levelled at Anselm is that he saw the atonement as essentially the work of Christ in his humanity. Aulén says that satisfaction is offered to God by a *Man*, who is also God. "What St Anselm does say", replies McIntyre, "is that satisfaction is offered to God by the God-man".⁴⁰ The atoning work of Christ cannot literally be the work of God from start to finish, because a part must be played by the human nature of Christ.

Anselm can more properly be criticised in two respects. In the first place, he seems unsure whether the atonement is *willed* by God from start to finish, or is partly willed by Christ alone. McIntyre writes:

St Anselm reaffirms the position which he had previously been maintaining, that the Father does not will the Death of Christ... Yet his whole scheme of soteriology breaks down that position and he ends by allowing, with qualms which concede the whole point, that the Father did will the Death of the Son.⁴¹

At least the drift of his argument is to see the atonement as God's gracious provision to mankind. We need not quarrel with McIntyre when he says that "It is *sola gratia* which is St Anselm's theme... For St Anselm the Atonement was an outpouring of the Divine Grace, unmerited by man and granted as God's greatest gift to him in Jesus Christ".⁴²

In the second place, and despite McIntyre's vigorous defence, the atonement is conceived in terms which are too legalistic. The emphasis is on God's honour: the difficulty is seen as on his side, rather than on man's. There is no remedy for sin as such. We can grant that God was gracious enough to find a way in which his honour could be affirmed without consigning sinners to eternal damnation, but the exercise was nevertheless one of balancing accounts. We are reminded of Toplady's calculation inspired by the National Debt:

The debt of sin which the average man owes at thirty years of age amounts to something like *one thousand million* breaches of the law. When shall we be able to pay off this immense debt? Never! But "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us". This will not only counterbalance, but infinitely *overbalance*, *all* the sins of the whole believing world".⁴³

It is evident that Wesley at times follows Anselm, and at times differs from him. Whether he had himself read *Cur Deus Homo?* is not clear, though there is a passage in John's Sermon 21 (Sermon on the Mount - 1) which suggests that his brother, at least, was familiar with the Anselmic approach:

But what shall he give in exchange for his soul, which is forfeited to the just vengeance of God? 'Wherewithal shall he come before the Lord?' How shall he pay him that he oweth? Were he from this moment to perform the most perfect obedience to every command of God, this would make no amends for a single sin, for any one act of past disobedience; seeing he owes God all the service he is able to perform, from this moment to all eternity: could he pay this, it would make no manner of amends for what he ought to have done before. He sees himself therefore utterly helpless with regard to atoning for his past sins; utterly unable to make any amends to God, to pay any ransom for his own soul.⁴⁴

In addition, Charles is very likely to have read Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which "in a few lines states a completely Anselmic soteriology".⁴⁵ Again, this is a conclusion which can only be reached by inference: see Appendix G. His father's book, *Advice to a Young Clergyman* (Appendix G, first page), contained the words, "Hooker everyone knows, and his strength and firmness can hardly be too much commended; nor is there any danger of his being solidly answered".⁴⁶

Wesley makes much of the need for God's justice to be satisfied: in "'Tis finished! The Messiah dies!"⁴⁷ he writes :

'Tis finished! all the debt is paid;
Justice divine is satisfied...
Exacted is the legal pain...
Saved from the legal curse I am.

On the other hand, he states categorically in the same hymn that "God for a guilty world hath died". If Anselm had been as explicit, he would not have been accused of saying that Christ suffered only as man.

Wesley is clear, too, that the atonement is the will of God from start to finish. Whatever his thoughts on satisfaction, substitution, and ransom may suggest about the nature of God, a broader view displays the depth of his grace, for the mission of the Godhead is no less than to save fallen man and allow him to enjoy God for all eternity:

1. The sacred Three conspire
In love to fallen man,
To exalt the creature higher,
And turn his loss to gain:
Still in the new creation
The persons all agree,
Joint causes of salvation,
To raise and perfect me.
2. The Father's grace allures me,
And to my Saviour gives;
The Saviour's blood assures me,
That God his child receives:
The Comforter bears witness
That I am truly his,
And brings my soul its fitness
For everlasting bliss.⁴⁸

This quotation shows also that Wesley is not content with the doctrine that Christ's death satisfies God's justice or honour. We are indeed forgiven, but we have also the *assurance* of forgiveness. And God not only forgives sin: he eradicates it from our nature. Wesley saw that it was not enough for the atonement to deal with the penalty for sin: it must also deal with sin itself, and it is when we contrast his doctrine of Perfection with Anselm and others who followed him that we see their deficiencies.

7.3 Wesley and Martin Luther

Both Wesleys were deeply influenced by Martin Luther. That John's heart was "strangely warmed" when "one was reading from Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans" is well known; and I have already quoted the lines in his commentary on Galatians which so affected Charles:

I spent some hours this evening in private with Martin Luther, who was greatly blessed to me, especially his conclusion of the 2nd chapter [of Galatians]. I laboured, waited, and prayed to feel "who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*".⁴⁹

Despite Aldersgate Street, however, John gave little more time to Luther, and indeed when in 1741 he came to read the Commentary on Galatians he was deeply disappointed, especially by Luther's disparagement of reason. He wrote:

I was utterly ashamed. How have I esteemed this book, only because I heard it so commended by others; or, at best, because I had read some excellent sentences quoted from it! But what shall I say, now I judge for myself, now I see with my own eyes? Why, not only that the author makes nothing out, clears up not one considerable difficulty; that he is quite shallow in his remarks on

many passages, and muddy and confused almost, on all; that he is deeply tinged with mysticism throughout, and hence often dangerously wrong. To instance only in one or two points: How does he (almost in the words of Tauler) decry reason, right or wrong, as an irreconcilable enemy to the Gospel of Christ! Whereas, what is reason (the faculty so called) but the power of apprehending, judging, and discoursing? Which power is no more to be condemned in the gross than seeing, hearing, or feeling. Again, how blasphemously does he speak of good works and of the law of God - constantly coupling the law with sin, death, hell or the devil; and teaching us that Christ delivers us from them all alike. Whereas it can no more be proved by Scripture that Christ delivers us from the law of God than that he delivers us from holiness or from heaven. Here (I apprehend) is the real spring of the grand error of the Moravians. They follow Luther, for better, for worse. Hence their "No works; no law; no commandments." But who art thou that "speakest evil of the law, and judgest the law?"⁵⁰

On the following day he records:

In the evening I came to London, and preached on those words (Gal. vi. 15), "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." After reading Luther's miserable comment upon the text, I thought it my bounden duty openly to warn the congregation against that dangerous treatise, and to retract whatever recommendation I might ignorantly have given of it.⁵¹

No doubt one explanation for his animosity is that John had a prosaic mind, whereas Luther was an intuitive thinker who, like Meister Eckhart, delighted in paradox. (Luther in fact praised the role of reason in daily life, though he renounced it as dangerous in the context of divine things).⁵² We have seen earlier that Melanchthon tried to systematise his thought and ended by misrepresenting him.⁵³ Charles, on the other hand, was intuitive and receptive to paradox, and would have been able to appreciate Luther's thought. There is not a great deal of direct evidence of Luther's influence, but how far did their ideas correspond? I shall briefly outline five main aspects of his thought in order to answer this question: the centrality of the cross in Luther's theology; his concept of satisfaction; Christ's representative work; the function of the Holy Spirit; and the idea of divine passibility.

The centrality of the cross in Luther's theology

"The cross alone is our theology", said Luther. In 1518 he wrote "*Theologia crucis* (id est de *deo crucifixo et abscondito* loquens)".⁵⁴ His *Deus absconditus* derives from words in Isaiah 45:15, "Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Saviour of Israel"; he is the God who is hidden *in* his revelation, "the God who will forever remain unknown to us, a mysterious and sinister being whose intentions remain concealed from us".⁵⁵ This "theology of the cross" is, therefore, a theology of a crucified and hidden God. These two attributes are to be taken together: God is hidden from us, except in so far as we see him in the cross of Christ. Luther alludes to Exodus 33:23 when he writes in Thesis 20: "The man who perceives the visible rearward parts of God as seen in

suffering and the cross does, however, deserve to be called a theologian". Alister McGrath summarises the *theologia crucis* as follows:

1. It is a theology of *revelation*, not speculation.
2. It is an indirect and concealed revelation. "Although it is indeed God who is revealed in the passion and cross of Christ, he is not immediately recognisable as God", because it is the *posteriori Dei* which are visible in this revelation. "The 'friends of the cross' know that beneath the humility and shame of the cross lie concealed the power and the glory of God".
3. This revelation is to be recognised in the sufferings and the death of Christ, rather than by reason.
4. This knowledge is a matter of faith.
5. God is particularly known through suffering. "Far from regarding suffering or evil as a nonsensical intrusion into the world (which Luther regards as the opinion of a 'theologian of glory'), the 'theologian of the cross' regards such suffering as his most precious treasure, for revealed and yet hidden in precisely such sufferings is none other than the living God, working out the salvation of those whom he loves".⁵⁶

Gordon Rupp writes:

The "theology of the cross" means not only that Christ's humanity and extreme humiliation are the way by which we know God: not only that his work "for us" is the ground of our salvation, and his work "in us", that we too are to conquer sin, death and the devil. The Christian man and the Christian Church must also share the sufferings of Christ, that "form of a servant" which brings an ambiguity and a contradiction into all their earthly existence.⁵⁷

Luther's concept of satisfaction

Luther's concept of satisfaction was somewhat different from that of Anselm. As we have seen, Anselm insisted that God's righteousness demanded *aut poena aut satisfactio*: either punishment, or satisfaction for his offended honour. For Luther, *satisfactio* is the fulfilment of the law, a somewhat different concept. "Christ fulfils the law and bears the penalty of sin and the divine wrath, not 'in order to reconcile God but rather to break the power of sin, wrath, and law, by which men are kept apart from God'".⁵⁸ The emphasis therefore is on the impersonal requirements of the law rather than on the personal demands of God.

Luther believed strongly that the work of Christ was a representative one. He shared the insight of Irenaeus and St Paul into the central importance of the doctrine of the

Second Adam.⁵⁹ “The soul is nailed to the cross with Christ”; “by virtue of his *humanitas* Christ makes himself like us and crucifies us”.⁶⁰ “Luther’s theology of the cross is not conceivable”, writes Moltmann, “without this mystical imitation of the cross and its *conformitas* theology”.⁶¹

The function of the Holy Spirit

Luther places a very strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit. It is his function or office to bring home the word to human beings:

The Holy Spirit teaches the word of grace, life, and salvation...for it does not suffice for the law to be objectively spoken to the soul, but formally, that is through the love of the law written in the heart and so to be the law.⁶²

For nobody understands his precepts unless it be given him from above... You understand them, however, because the Holy Spirit teaches you... Therefore those most sadly err who presume to understand the holy scriptures and the law of God by taking hold of them with their own understanding and study.⁶³

The idea of divine passibility

Luther was the only theologian of his time who was receptive to divine passibility. His doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum* stressed the reciprocity of the divine and human natures of Christ and the sharing of attributes. If Christ suffered, then logically God suffered. Paul Althus however argues that this led to deipassianism rather than patipassianism: in other words, that God suffered rather than the Father.⁶⁴ To put this another way, what is true of Christ is true of God, but what is true of Christ is not necessarily true of the Father. The Son suffers, therefore God suffers, but the Father may not suffer. Wesley’s theology was compatible with this (see page 63 ff above).

Franz Hildebrant⁶⁵ notes that phrases from Luther’s hymn “Gelobet seist du, Jesus Christ” recur verbatim in Wesley: “Our God contracted to a span, Incomprehensibly made man”; and, in “Granted is the Saviour’s prayer”:⁶⁶

God, the everlasting God
Makes with mortals his abode;
Whom the heavens cannot contain,
He vouchsafes to dwell in man.

A hidden God?

It will be clear from what has gone before that there are many parallels between Luther and Charles Wesley in their views of the representative nature of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, even though we cannot prove a direct influence. But did Charles believe in a “hidden God”? His theology is without question a “theology of the cross”, and in

his hymns references to Christ's suffering and blood abound. Like Luther, he had struggled to find the true nature of God. He came to discover that "thy nature and thy name is love" ("Come, O thou Traveller unknown" - *Hymns & Psalms* 434).⁶⁷ In a hymn less well-known, he writes "To wrestle till we see thy face, And know thy hidden name" ("Shepherd divine, our wants relieve" - *Hymns & Psalms* 558).⁶⁸ Another hymn is addressed to "Thou great mysterious God unknown".⁶⁹ He recounts his own personal experience in a hymn "For One Convinced of Unbelief";⁷⁰ lamenting the fact that he is not yet born again, he writes:

Nor can I yet behold his face,
Or find the God unknown.
A God that hides himself he is...

Even more to the point are his hymns based on Isaiah 45:15:

Thou God unsearchable, unknown,
Who still concealst thyself from me,
Hear an apostate spirit groan,
Broke off, and far exiled from thee,
But conscious of my fall I mourn,
And fain I would to thee return.⁷¹

An hidden God indeed thou art!⁷²

How should I know unless from thee,
That thou art still a God unknown?⁷³

We note the paradox in the last example of God himself disclosing that he is a God unknown. This text also figures in his preaching, for on 4 May 1740 he recounts in his Journal, "I dwelt on that word, 'Thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel and Saviour,' and spoke, with much liberty and power, of the wilderness-state, and the means of grace."⁷⁴ However, all these examples relate to personal faith, and do not have the cosmic aspect of Luther's theology (or of those modern theologians who follow him). Nevertheless, there is a strong presumption that he was aware of Luther's thought; if not, then their theologies are remarkably similar.

There is another interesting parallel in the way God deals with sinners. Luther writes that the sinner recognises himself as a guilty criminal, standing in terrible isolation before the tribunal of an eternal and angry God, convinced that he can expect nothing other than eternal damnation as his portion, and that there is no one upon whom he can call for support or assistance. Through this realisation he is moved to flee to God against God (*de Deum contra Deum*), to receive the mercy which lies hidden under his terrible wrath.⁷⁵ It reminds us again of Wesley's statement that "God hath quenched the wrath of God".⁷⁶

7.4 Charles Wesley and Modern Theology

It would clearly be impracticable to relate Charles Wesley to modern theology as a whole. For instance, there would be little point of contact between him and Don Cupitt. We have to ask whether there are any areas in modern theology where Wesley's ideas would be considered relevant or attractive, and whether there are modern theologians who would approach them on basically similar lines. On the first of these points, we can consider two fundamental questions which theologians are exploring: firstly, the question of **theodicy**, of vindicating the ways of God to humankind; and secondly, the question of **human sin** and its solution. These are of course forced upon us by events like the Holocaust, because we need to ask both "Why did God permit this?", and "How can we escape from the evil in human nature disclosed by this?".

On the second of our points, it is not difficult to find theologians who are, like Wesley, biblical in their approach and find the cross central in their theology. Those whom I shall quote are strongly biblical, even if some seem to attach almost excessive significance to one verse: one can instance Kitamori's use of Jeremiah 31:20.⁷⁷ But there is always a strong emphasis on the cross of Christ. One of the four strands of modern theology discerned by Paul Fiddes is the theology of the cross (*Kreuzestheologie*).⁷⁸ It is above all in the cross that answers to these problems are being sought, and immediately there is a point of contact with Wesley. Moltmann, for instance, urges theologians "to develop a particular theology within earshot of the dying cry of Jesus",⁷⁹ and asserts that there can be no theology of the incarnation which does not become a theology of the cross.⁸⁰

The question of theodicy

We can now go on to consider the question of theodicy from the aspect of such theologians. The question which Wesley and others asked in the eighteenth century is no longer the central one. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Jürgen Moltmann asks, "How can the ways of a God of holy love be justified before a suffering humanity?"⁸¹ rather than "How can the ways of sinful humanity be put right before a God of holy love?". Instead,

therefore, of Christ pleading our case before the judgement seat of God, Moltmann sees him pleading God's cause before the judgement seat of an abused and tortured humanity. In the one case we are the villains, and in the other the victims. It is significant that Moltmann's best-known work is *The Crucified God*; in it, he writes:

Christian theology finds its identity as such in the cross of Christ. Christian life is identified as Christian in a double process of identification with the crucified. His cross distinguishes belief from unbelief and even more from superstition.⁸²

He finds support for his approach in Karl Barth: "The *crucified* Jesus is the 'image of the invisible God'".⁸³

As they look at the cross, these theologians are drawn towards certain distinct positions:

- God suffers, in contrast to the traditional doctrine of divine impassibility;
- God's "wrath" can be identified with his pain;
- God is not, in the traditional sense, omnipotent: the Incarnation and the cross show that he has emptied himself of his power (*kenosis*);
- God's immanence is at least as important as his transcendence.

Does God suffer?

In *The Passion of God* (University Press, Macon GA, 1985) Warren McWilliams reviews six modern theologians⁸⁴ who have asked the question "Does God suffer?" They are not the first to have done so, but for the first nineteen centuries few theologians would have given an unhesitating "Yes". Hans Küng shows how the plain words of scripture became progressively blunted. The first Christian theologians followed scripture in speaking of the "sufferings of my God" and the "blood of God" (Irenaeus), of the "suffering God" or the "crucified God" (Athanasius, Cyril, Hilary). But then an inclination to attribute impassibility to the *humanity of Christ* arose out of the hope of protecting the impassibility of the *divine Logos* himself, since a God who bore suffering could not, it was argued, truly be God. Küng agrees with W Elert, that "at the beginning of Christian theology the principle of God's impassibility was not really substantiated from Scripture; it occurred more in the form of a self-evident axiom, taken over in practice from Plato's theory of God. Only too often, behind the Christ-image, we catch sight of 'the immobile, dispassionate countenance of the God of Plato, augmented by some features of Stoic ethics'".⁸⁵

Divine impassibility is explicitly upheld in the Thirty-Nine Articles (Article I, which states that God is “without body, parts, or passions”), and in the Westminster Confession (Chapter 2). Augustine defined *passio* as “a commotion of the mind contrary to reason”, and therefore inappropriate for God. Anselm asked how God could fail to be compassionate, but concluded that he only *seemed* to be so.⁸⁶ Luther argued that if Christ suffered, then logically God also did, but the other Reformers did not take this view. More recently, Baron von Hügel said that suffering is intrinsically evil; God can have sympathy, but he cannot suffer.⁸⁷

Since 1900, however, many theologians have argued that God does suffer, among them William Temple. In 1926 J K Mozley noted a growing reaction against impassibility. The six theologians reviewed by McWilliams are not therefore unique, and indeed I have already quoted Alister McGrath - by no means a liberal - that “The Christian tradition is saturated with the idea of a God who *acts*, who *loves*, who *gives* - and who *suffers*. This idea is far removed from Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover (unmoved emotionally as well as physically!) who is wholly unconscious of the world, serene and unmoved by its pain and suffering”.⁸⁸ (I do not agree with McGrath, for the reasons just stated, that Christian tradition has been saturated with the idea of a God who *suffers*; but what he says reflects the change in outlook). Jürgen Moltmann answers his own question by saying: “Even Auschwitz is in God himself. Even Auschwitz is taken up into the grief of the Father, the surrender of the Son and the power of the Spirit”.⁸⁹

Is God omnipotent?

The question of divine suffering must be considered along with that of omnipotence. Theologians have traditionally maintained that God’s love is associated with action rather than feeling. Augustine said, “When God pities, he does not grieve and he liberates”.⁹⁰ Suffering is caused by the inability to remove pain. Hence the suffering caused by a war might be ascribed to God’s vengeance on the defeated nation, or his judgement on sin. But the twentieth century has become the age of the refugee, of the holocaust, of the civilian incinerated by a nuclear bomb, or of a child burned with napalm. It is now impossible to hold that God’s will is being done in each of these circumstances. If belief in God is to be maintained, the only way out is to accept that God’s will is frustrated by human sin, and that accordingly he suffers with his creation. William Temple wrote, “There cannot be a God of love’, men say, “because if there were, and He looked upon

this world, His heart would break'. The Church points to the Cross and says, 'His heart does break'. Similarly: "Only a God in whose perfect Being pain has its place can win and hold our worship; for otherwise the creature would in fortitude surpass the Creator".⁹¹

The wrath of God

It might be thought that those theologians who stress God's suffering would find little place for the wrath of God. That would be a legitimate assumption if wrath were still seen as the personal anger of God against the sinner, requiring that he be appeased or satisfied. If, however, wrath can be an attribute contained within his love, there is no reason why wrath and pain should not co-exist. Moltmann, for instance, writes: "Love is the source and basis of the possibility of the wrath of God. The opposite of love is not wrath, but indifference".⁹² This is an approach shared by the Japanese theologian Kazoh Kitamori. Kitamori is very much a man of one text, in this case Jeremiah 31:20. In the Japanese Literary Version, this is translated "My heart is pained", which is close to Luther's "Darum bricht mir mein Herz" ("Therefore my heart is broken"; most modern versions use the word "yearns", which is a little weaker).⁹³ In this text Kitamori finds the nub of his Christian theology:

[it] literally agrees with the truth of the cross. No more appropriate words can be found to reveal the truth of the cross.⁹⁴

Thus Jeremiah used the word "pain" in its most precise meaning to describe the love of God toward sinners. Only this word could express the severest struggle of God's love which Jeremiah saw.⁹⁵

What is this pain which God feels for Ephraim? "The pain of God is the forgiveness of sins... The pain, if real, penetrates the one who forgives, and issues forth in intent love".⁹⁶ Although Kitamori attaches great significance to this text, he speaks of the Bible as showing that the pain of God belongs to his *eternal being*, and refers to Revelation 1:17-18, 2:8, and 13:8. "The cross is in no sense an external act of God, but an act within himself".⁹⁷ The pain of which he speaks is not, however, the same as pain experienced by God through human sin:

What we call the "pain of God" is not simply the response of his heart at our sins. It is the *wrath of God*, and not his pain, which responds to sin... God is angry at our sins, never hurt. God suffers pain only when he tries to *love* us, the objects of his wrath.⁹⁸

It will not be surprising that Moltmann's theology frequently invokes Luther; we are more surprised that Kitamori appeals to him almost equally. For Moltmann, Luther's *theologia crucis* is "the key signature for all Christian theology".⁹⁹ To a great extent

Kitamori's theology is a revival of Luther's "theology of the cross", and in particular of his "hidden God" (*Deus absconditus*) based on Isaiah 45:15.¹⁰⁰ Following on from his statement that the cross is an act within God himself, he continues,

Luther insists that the premise is that "the absolute necessity for the sacrifice of the Son is grounded in God himself" (eine absolute, innergöttlich begründete Notwendigkeit der Dahingabe des Sohnes)... Therefore, according to Luther, "the gospel was proclaimed even before the foundation of the world, as far as God is concerned".¹⁰¹

He sees the justification for Luther's concept of the "hidden God" in this, that the "the wrath of God is the *means* of revealing his love".¹⁰²

The God who empties himself

Many modern theologians take very seriously the statement in Philippians 2:7 that Christ emptied himself, taking upon himself the form of a servant. The Church Fathers had been influenced by Greek thought to the extent that they saw this emptying (*kenosis*) of Christ as a veiling or disguising of God's glory during the Incarnation rather than a genuine self-limitation.¹⁰³ Geddes MacGregor, however, calls for an application of *kenosis* to the totality of God's nature and behaviour.¹⁰⁴ He notes that *kenotic* approaches were at one time very popular, but then fell into disrepute because of the theological problems involved.¹⁰⁵ He contends that they should be revived in a much more thoroughgoing way: "I wish to consider *kenosis* as the root principle of Being. To call God *Kenotic Being* is to specify what we mean by saying 'God is love'".¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, he is prepared to say that the self-emptying of Christ is the emptying of the whole Trinity, and to run the risk of being accused of *Patripassianism*.¹⁰⁷

MacGregor is greatly influenced here by Simone Weil, who conceived of creation as an act of divine self-emptying, a self-withdrawal or self-diminution on God's part,¹⁰⁸ and wrote:

We have to *empty God of his divinity* in order to love him. He emptied himself of his divinity by becoming man, then of his humanity by becoming a corpse.¹⁰⁹

Love consents to all and commands only those who consent. Love is abdication. God is abdication.¹¹⁰

MacGregor continues, in words which explain his title, that "The costliest aspect of creation is letting the creatures be. It also provides the principal clue to the problem of evil. ¹¹¹ ... The divine permissiveness that lets all creatures be can help us to understand how evil emerges and what it is".¹¹² He reacts very strongly against what he calls "power

mania"¹¹³ and "dynamolatriy"¹¹⁴ in the Church. "What we should see in God, then, is One whose nature is to create and who, in being what he is, is ever engaged in self-abnegation".¹¹⁵

God immanent

Just as the traditional emphasis on God's impassibility is being replaced by an emphasis on his suffering, so the emphasis on his transcendence is being replaced or qualified by one on his immanence. The Church has, of course, always held that both concepts are valid and need to be held in tension; overstress the transcendence, and you end up with the God of Deism, wholly unconcerned with human affairs; overstress the immanence, and you end up with pantheism. Nevertheless, transcendence is much the easier for the human mind to accept. It is the transcendent God who is the Creator at the beginning, and the Judge at the end; it is the transcendent God who is seen to intervene in human affairs. Such a God appeals to our religious instincts, providing apparent proofs for our beliefs, siding with us against our enemies, and granting our wishes when prayed to. The God of the Bible is largely a transcendent God, though it is inevitable that its authors are concerned with the remarkable rather than the everyday.

Yet God is also a God "in whom we live and move, and have our being".¹¹⁶ John Robinson famously entered a protest against the concept that God must be seen as "out there":

It is precisely the identification of Christianity - and transcendence - with this conception of theism that I believe we must be prepared to question.... Can [such a Being] be rehabilitated, or is the whole conception of that sort of a God, "up there", "out there", or however one likes to put it, a projection, an idol, that can and should be torn down?¹¹⁷

It may well be that we have failed to discern the immanent God in evolution, guiding a universe which possesses an element of free will (which may indeed be a "selfish gene") towards an ultimate goal.

I suspect that talk of whether God is transcendent or immanent is not particularly helpful. Both terms seem to me rather slippery. Religious experience is generally taken to be the experience of God's immanence, but could it not be contended that it is rather a sign of his transcendence, his immanence being as undetectable to us as our own body odour? In that case, religious experience is the transcendent God calling attention to the immanent God within us. The American theologian Edward Farley, after admitting that he wrote a book on the subject many years previously, says that the terms "immanence"

and "transcendence" are not very helpful. "Transcendence and immanence seem to be terms more suitable for a liturgical rather than a conceptual discourse, that is, terms for the expression of a sense of God's nearness and a sense of God's 'Godness'".¹¹⁸

With that caveat, we can say that the emphasis in the theodicy of suffering is on the immanence, the nearness, of God. This greater emphasis on immanence is also in harmony with a greater emphasis on the feminine aspects of God. We have traditionally discounted scriptural references to God's identification with the feminine (such as Isaiah 49:15), just as we have discounted references to his suffering. Dorothee Sölle writes:

The religious question of suffering is no longer the one so often heard: how can God permit that?, but a more difficult one, which first needs to be studied: how does our pain become God's pain and how does God's pain appear in our pain...

When we speak of the pain of God, then we no longer see God in the purely masculine presentation. God is then our mother who cries about what we do to each other... God consoles us as a mother does, She cannot magic away the pain (although that occasionally happens!), but She holds us on Her lap...¹¹⁹

The totally transcendent God is not bound with us in our pain.¹²⁰

Kitamori has a chapter on "The Immanence and Transcendence of the Pain of God". He writes:

The Logos who is completely immanent in the pain of the world can absolutely transcend it. The pain of God, which transcends the pain of actuality, is still transcendent while immanent in it.

Clearly the pain of God passes from immanence to transcendence because of his grace. The pain of God, since it is grace, becomes immanent first in human suffering, but, for this very reason, becomes transcendent. This is the act of grace. When grace becomes all-pervading, it shifts from immanence to transcendence... Even when God's pain has become transcendent, he has by no means abandoned his immanent love; on the contrary, he has *pervaded* it.¹²¹

Human Sin

If we turn secondly to the question of human sin and its solution, it is clear that the fact of sin has never been in dispute, though the possibility of cure has been regarded more optimistically by some theologies than by others. The prevailing view of sin at the time of the Wesleys was certainly that it was disobedience to the revealed will of God: I have already alluded to John's definition "a voluntary transgression of a known law which it is in our power to obey".¹²² Such a view is similar to that which we hold on the criminal law in this country: ignorance of the law is no excuse, and transgressions merit punishment. In this century, however, we have more and more come to hold that sin goes much deeper than mere disobedience, and cannot be overcome by a mere effort of the will. Freud and others have pointed to the part played by the unconscious in determining what we do for

good or ill. In many eyes this has been seen as undermining religion, but psychoanalysis seems much more able to explain the *origin* of our problems than to change us inwardly. It is the simplistic view of sin as deliberate disobedience which is challenged, and not the classic Christian concepts of an original propensity to sin (as, for instance in Romans 7:7-24), and the necessity of spiritual rebirth and sanctification. Indeed, the Jungian concept of the Shadow has been eagerly seized on by Christian theologians and counsellors: Christopher Bryant, referring back to those same verses in Romans, says, "The sin which dwells in a person is precisely what Jung personifies as the shadow".¹²³

Paul S Fiddes, in *Past Event and Present Salvation*, says that in modern times "The image of healing has become predominant among concepts of atonement".¹²⁴ There are plenty of Christian books written in recent years on the subject of healing. Most of these deal with the effect of healing ministry on the body, but in general they correctly emphasise the importance of inner healing as an adjunct: for instance, physical healing cannot be expected where the patient is full of bitterness or resentment. A review of quite voluminous papers I have accumulated over the years on this subject reveals much biblical theology but nothing relating directly to the cross. Further, one can say that healing has been the province of counselling and liturgy rather than of theology. This is not to dispute what Fiddes says, only to argue that the overlap between healing (as it is popularly understood) and the theology of atonement is not a large one. Theologians are inclined to treat the healing aspect of the cross as within the academic realm, and counsellors to work out their theology as they go along. Moreover, those who most stress the atonement (conservative evangelicals) have so far shown themselves least likely to be concerned with the healing ministry. It is a sad but inescapable fact that little is yet done to use the traditional concepts of forgiveness, justification and assurance, as seen in the light of the cross, to heal the mental and spiritual problems of humanity.

We have seen how many of the older theories of atonement were primarily concerned about the preservation of God's honour and justice, and the rescue of sinful man from damnation and punishment. They had little to say about the effect of the atonement on our sinfulness, though it was of course open to them to see sanctification as a work of the Holy Spirit in the subsequent life of the believer (though paranoia about the dangers of "salvation by works" might lead them to play down even this). Fiddes sets out how the atonement can change our inner nature:

Christ, the obedient Son, comes under judgement in the human law court and also before God his Father. This legal model of atonement tells us not that he endures a penalty instead of us, but that he can create a penitence within us. Such penitence is expiating, in that it wipes out sin by replacing an attitude of sinful rebellion with an attitude of home-coming.¹²⁵

Later he quotes Reinhold Niebuhr:

The self in this state of preoccupation with itself must be "broken" and "shattered" or, in the Pauline phrase, "crucified". It cannot be saved merely by being enlightened... The self is shattered whenever it is confronted by the power and holiness of God and becomes genuinely conscious of the real source and centre of all life.¹²⁶

What of Wesley?

How far might Wesley have been in sympathy with these theologians? It is interesting that Daniel Day Williams cites the biblical theology movement and the new concern for the atonement as among the most crucial factors in the "structural shift in the Christian mind towards acceptance of divine passibility".¹²⁷ There are indeed many points of similarity, but we should beware of seeing Wesley entirely out of his time. He would claim as much as Moltmann that his God is a scriptural one, whose character is disclosed by Jesus Christ, but he was above all pains to maintain orthodoxy as taught by the Church of England. Moltmann's chief work on this subject is *The Crucified God*, and Wesley uses the same term himself, for example in "Thou Shepherd of Israel and mine" (*Hymns & Psalms* 750):¹²⁸

Ah, show me that happiest place,
The place of thy people's abode,
Where saints in an ecstasy gaze,
And hang on a crucified God...

On the other hand, he implies elsewhere that Christ only suffered in his human nature:

The Partner of our flesh and blood,
As man, inferior is to God:
The lower part of Christ, the heel,
Was bruised, and did our sorrows feel:
But though he would his life resign,
His part superior is Divine,
And doth, beyond the reach of pain,
God over all for ever reign.¹²⁹

The most we can say here is that, since Christ had two natures, but one Person, and was "very God", in that Person God suffers. As Rattenbury puts it, "God indeed suffers because God was in Christ, but Patripassianism is skilfully avoided and denied; the God-man, not God apart from man, suffered".¹³⁰ Furthermore, God suffers in this sense only in the cross of Christ, whereas the modern theologian would say that the cross is a symbol of God's eternal suffering. "The eternal cross", writes Lee, "is the prototype of

the historic cross".¹³¹ In retrospect, we can see the modern concept of divine suffering as supplying a possible solution to the problem which the Wesleys faced vis-à-vis the Calvinists. The Calvinists would have contended that the Wesleys made salvation entirely dependent on the human will, in other words on our response to the gospel; therefore, God was not sovereign. But if our rejection of the gospel means that God suffers, then God is no longer "high and dry", as it were, but is still involved in the redemptive process.

There is however no question that Charles Wesley, like the theologians quoted above, sees God primarily as love. The God to be wrestled with is one whose nature and whose name is love. Holiness and union with God are to be found only in loving God and one's neighbour. If the Father inflicts punishment on the Son, it is only because the Trinity, acting together, take this course in their love for lost mankind.

And we can say also that Wesley took seriously the *kenosis*, the self-emptying of Christ. In one of his best-known hymns he writes that Christ "Emptied himself of all but love, And bled for Adam's helpless race" ("And can it be" - *Hymns & Psalms* 216).¹³² Less well known, but still sung, are the lines in "Glory be to God on high":¹³³

Emptied of his majesty,
Of his dazzling glories shorn,
Being's source begins to be,
And God himself is born!

Just as striking is:

The eternal God from heaven came down,
The King of Glory dropped his crown
And veiled his majesty;
Emptied of all but love he came;
Jesus, I call thee by the name
Thy pity bore for me.¹³⁴

He sees this emptying not as a "mere veiling or disguising of God's glory during the Incarnation", but as a genuine self-limitation. On the other hand, it applies to Christ alone, rather than to the Godhead. It is significant that Donald G Dawe finds the *kenosis* theme appropriated in some forms of evangelical piety (eg Zinzendorf, the Wesleys).¹³⁵

Wesley, like Moltmann, sees an identity between the characters of God and of Christ, but the significance is in the opposite direction: what goes for God, goes for Christ also;

all the fulness of God dwells in him. However, in so far as what Christ does is willed by the Father, death upon the cross reflects the character of God.

Wesley does, of course, emphasise the wrath of God, and it may be that the impersonal way in which this is referred to (as I noted in Chapter 2) results from the attempt to postulate a God “without passions”. When we look at his theology as a whole, however, God’s wrath can be seen as part of his love and grace, and in this he is in harmony with the modern theologians.

Kitamori’s “mysticism of pain”¹³⁶ would certainly have appealed to Wesley. Although he aspires to be “dissolved in love”,¹³⁷ rather than in pain, in order to be united with Christ, he regards fellowship in his sufferings as something to be valued:

I thirst to drink my master's cup,
Thy fiery baptism to know,
To take thy hallowed burden up,
Companion of the Man of woe.¹³⁸

Such fellowship is desirable in its own right, in order to repay our debt to the Saviour, and it is a way of achieving perfection. Occasionally, however, he looks upon it as a way of alleviating our own pain, as in these lines for a woman in childbirth:

O let thy grief dry up her tears,
And while thy mangled form appears,
Thy visage marred with blood,
Let troubles, fear, and torture cease,
And all her happy soul confess
Her Saviour and her God.
Victorious, with thy cross in view,
By thine own travail bring her through,
The agonizing hour...¹³⁹

In a recent sermon I heard on Creation, the preacher said that it was nowadays seen less and less as an instantaneous act in which God was in charge throughout, and more and more as a costly commitment by God, whose struggle could be likened to the pangs of childbirth. Jürgen Moltmann, he went on, was typical of modern theologians when he referred to “The Crucified God”, and we were reminded of Charles Wesley’s lines, “Faith cries out: ‘Tis he, ‘tis he, My God, that suffers there!’”. Only in the light of Christ, and the love shown in his coming, could creation be understood. God wanted our free response, and in creation there was an element of randomness, as scientists were now saying. Yet when things apparently go wrong, God was working away to redeem the situation. I asked him afterwards whether this was consciously process theology, but he

denied this. Nevertheless, his sermon illustrates the tendency to see God as suffering through his involvement in the world, and as redeeming evil rather than preventing it. It also seemed natural for him to quote Wesley.

I fancy Wesley himself would have found this approach strange and, indeed, unacceptable. His attitudes were very much circumscribed by the Bible (traditionally interpreted) and by the Thirty-Nine Articles. Modern theologians interpret the suffering of God in a cosmic way, whereas Wesley did so in a soteriological one. And yet the seeds for the modern approach are already there in Wesley: the belief that God *can* be said to suffer, and that he desires our free response to his love.

7.5 Charles Wesley's Enduring Achievement

What, finally, is Wesley's enduring achievement? I have to say straight away that I do not see him as a systematic or original theologian. A man who was devoted to the doctrines of the Church of England and resolutely concerned to avoid any suspicion of heresy or "enthusiasm" is unlikely to show originality, quite apart from the fact that his output is very largely in verse. Nevertheless, there are five characteristics which make him distinctive in his own age, and inspiring for later generations. These are:

- The importance he attaches to the Godhead acting in unity.
- The link he makes between incarnation and atonement.
- The link he makes between atonement and holiness.
- His mysticism, which arises out of the love shown by God in the cross.
- The ability to communicate all these in his verse.

The Godhead acts in unity

Wesley sees the atonement as a work of the whole Trinity acting together: there can be no question of the Son taking the initiative to deliver us from the Father's condemnation, or of the Holy Spirit being superfluous. As St Augustine put it, "Everything is the combined work of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of both, in equal and harmonious activity".¹⁴⁰ Wesley writes:

Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
In council join again,
To restore thine image lost

By frail, apostate man;
O might I thy form express,
Through faith begotten from above,
Stamped with real holiness,
And filled with perfect love.¹⁴¹

That term "council" may seem to verge on tritheism, but he is also careful to preserve the singularity of the Trinity, an emphasis which is congenial to those modern theologians (such as Barth) who stress the its unity and have revived the use of the term "mode".¹⁴² Thus Wesley writes:

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Resides within my heart.¹⁴³

Likewise :

While Father, Son and Holy Ghost
Fills all the sacred void.¹⁴⁴

The same "singularisation" of the Trinity appears in verse 6 of "Come on, my partners in distress" as he describes the worship of "That great mysterious Deity":¹⁴⁵

The Father shining on his throne,
The glorious co-eternal Son,
The Spirit, one and seven,
Conspire our rapture to complete;
And lo! we fall before his feet,
And silence heightens heaven.

We fall before *his* feet, not *their* feet.

Incarnation is linked with atonement

Secondly, he links atonement firmly with incarnation. We have seen in Chapter 1 that the Fathers almost equated the two ideas; it is only with the prevalence of "satisfaction" theories that the incarnation has often been seen simply as a preliminary to the death of Christ on the cross. Only if Christ was born could he die. But Wesley goes much further than this, in seeing the incarnation as a taking of our flesh into God:

He deigns in flesh to appear,
Widest extremes to join;
To bring our vileness near,
And make us all divine:
And we the life of God shall know,
For God is manifest below.¹⁴⁶

It is clear, then, that Atonement is, for him, far more than escaping from the wrath and condemnation of God. It is at-one-ment in its fullest sense, of man becoming not merely pardoned, but potentially divine. Such an emphasis speaks far more resonantly to the modern world than one on satisfaction and substitution.

Holiness is secured by atonement

Thirdly, he teaches that, since the divine nature is love, holiness is the same as loving God and our neighbour, and the atonement provides a means of achieving this.

Thou hast for me a ransom paid,
To change my human to divine,
To cleanse from all iniquity,
And make the sinner all like thee.¹⁴⁷

Take the dear purchase of thy blood,
Thy blood shall wash us white as snow,
Present us sanctified to God,
And perfected in love below.¹⁴⁸

And will he not his purchase take
Who died to make us all his own,
One spirit with himself to make
Flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone?¹⁴⁹

Wesley thus stands in opposition to those who see the atonement as securing only the *forgiveness* of sins, or those who see the holiness of the Christian as an imputed righteousness. He also stands in opposition to those who see holiness as acquired apart from the atonement, by the work of the Holy Spirit alone. Wesleyan holiness is not only that of Christ, it is especially the holiness of Christ crucified. The Holy Spirit must "apply" the blood of Christ.

Although he was first and foremost an evangelist, Charles Wesley's doctrine of holiness is inescapably a call to a life of sacrificial action in the world. His hymn "Jesus, the gift divine I ask"¹⁵⁰ beseeches Jesus:

That living water now bestow -
Thy Spirit and thyself, on me

and continues in verse 4:

Thy mind throughout my life be shown,
While, listening to the sufferer's cry,
The widow's and the orphan's groan,
On mercy's wings I swiftly fly,
The poor and helpless to relieve,
My life, my all, for them to give.

He is therefore nearer to the spirit of modern theologians who emphasise *praxis*, as in social action, or even liberation theology, than might at first sight appear to be the case. This is a point which has been recognised by Thomas A Langford when he writes of Wesley:

He was not a formidable intellect, his contribution was not that of rational insight, exegetical perception, or an engagement with the regnant philosophy of his age. Rather, he set theological

expression within a special context; he tied theology inseparably to the worship of God; he welded theory and praxis together; he made theology an inseparable part of the holistic love of God.¹⁵¹

Charles's Mysticism of the Cross

Charles, unlike his brother, was a mystic;¹⁵² and it is that mysticism which is his glory. He invites us to enter into the very presence of God, by virtue of both the birth of Christ and his death on the cross:

Boldly we approach the throne
By a living way unknown,
Way of faith which Jesus made,
Through the veil of flesh displayed;
Through his rent humanity
God our Friend in heaven we see.¹⁵³

The wonder of the divine love fills him with awe and amazement, and several times (even in hymns we still sing) he recalls Ephesians 3:18 as he dwells on the "height and depth" of that love:

What shall I do my God to love,
My loving God to praise?
The length, and breadth, and height to prove,
And depth of sovereign grace?¹⁵⁴

I long to know, and to be made known,
The heights and depths of love divine,
The kindness thou to me hast shown
Whose every sin was counted thine:
My God for me resigned his breath;
He died to save my soul from death.¹⁵⁵

Come then, and to my soul reveal
The heights and depths of grace.¹⁵⁶

The promise that we should be "partakers of the divine nature" ("those words" from 2 Peter 1:4 on which John opened his Testament on the morning of 24 May 1738) was no less important for Charles. Teresa Berger states that, though his citation of this text is not frequent, the notion remains significant.¹⁵⁷ In fact, *Hymns & Psalms* lists eight references, of which seven are from Wesley; none is entirely explicit, but Berger very properly refers to "Father of everlasting grace":¹⁵⁸

2. Send us the Spirit of thy Son,
To make the depths of Godhead known,
To make us share the life divine...

This participation, she says, "is personal and real...not so much about partnership with God as it is about union with God".¹⁵⁹ And union with God is vividly depicted in a hymn

which was being sung as early as 1739 and has remained in Methodist hymn-books to this day:

Eager for thee I ask and pant:
So strong, the principle divine
Carries me out with sweet constraint
Till all my hallowed soul is thine,
Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in thine immensity.¹⁶⁰

This participation or union with God is, moreover, something to be evident in the life of the believer. Charles wrote of an early Methodist:

She was, what words can never paint,
A spotless soul, a sinless saint,
In perfect love renewed,
A mirror of the Deity,
A transcript of the One in Three,
A temple filled with God.
The witness of his hallowing grace
Talked with her Maker face to face,
And, marked with his new name,
His nature visibly impressed
While all her even life expressed
The meekness of the Lamb.¹⁶¹

Such, however, is God's plan for us all:

You, whom he ordained to be
Transcripts of the Trinity.¹⁶²

Didst thou not in thy person join
The natures human and Divine,
That God and man might be
Henceforth inseparably one?
Haste then, and make thy nature known,
Incarnated in me.¹⁶³

...That only can suffice for me,
The whole mysterious Trinity
Inhabiting my heart.¹⁶⁴

The heavenly man, the heart renewed,
The living portraiture of God.¹⁶⁵

...And when we rise in love renewed,
Our souls resemble thee,
An image of the Triune God
To all eternity.¹⁶⁶

...And when thy bleeding love thou showst,
And dost to me impart,
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Resides within my heart.¹⁶⁷

The Trinity works together in the atonement, and so works that we might share the life of the three Persons who comprise it: as Meister Eckhart puts it, "to be caught up in the

inner life of the Trinity, to actually participate in the unutterable communion and union of the Three, in the silence of eternity".¹⁶⁸

Charles the Doxologist

It has many times been commented that, for Methodists, the hymn-book contains their creed; and those credal hymns are the hymns of Charles Wesley. All too often, creeds are viewed as a test of doctrinal orthodoxy, rather than as a celebration of God's salvation. But verse is less threatening than prose, and singing is less threatening than reciting. People who are uncomfortable in saying the Nicene Creed may be perfectly happy to sing Wesley's hymns, in which the doctrine emerges as a celebration, and almost invariably reflects his personal experience. Let me take a few examples relevant to atonement:

O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free!
A heart that always feels thy blood
So freely spilt for me;¹⁶⁹

With what rapture
Gaze we on those glorious scars.¹⁷⁰

Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?¹⁷¹

Ready for all thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death thine endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.¹⁷²

The intensity of his feeling here transcends time and language. His hymns were the perfect vehicle for the Methodist revival in the eighteenth century, for they put into words the experience of justification, forgiveness, oneness with Christ, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and sanctification. They remain popular, not because we think on exactly the same lines ("blood" imagery is largely foreign to us now), nor simply out of tradition or antiquarian interest, but because they express a longing for the things of God which many Christians feel and long to put into words.

Notes to Chapter 7

- 1 Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, *Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1992, no 183.
- 2 Page 35 above.
- 3 Page 42 above.
- 4 Pages 35 and 50 above.
- 5 Page 106 above.
- 6 See page 64 above.
- 7 I have not included Calvin. This is not because his thought is totally different from Wesley's: there is a PhD dissertation on this very point by Jin Kim Doo, *Holiness in Calvin and Wesley* (Bristol University, 1995). But (as the dissertation demonstrates) it is a long and laborious process to disentangle Calvin himself from the *Calvinism* to which the Wesleys were so strongly opposed on points like Reprobation and Perfection.
- 8 See *The Wesleyan Heritage: Essays of Albert C Outler* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1991).
- 9 Ted A Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change*, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1991.
- 10 See Robert G Tuttle Jr, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology* (Exeter, The Paternoster Press, 1978), p 47.
- 11 John Clayton (d. 1773) was a tutor of Brasenose College, a rigorous High Churchman, and a Jacobite. His zeal drew him towards the Holy Club, but he was unsympathetic towards the evangelical faith which the Wesleys acquired in 1738.
- 12 *The Wesleyan Heritage: Essays of Albert C Outler* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1991, p 102.
- 13 John S Simon, *John Wesley and the Religious Societies* (Epworth 1921), p 96.
- 14 *The Wesleyan Heritage: Essays of Albert C Outler* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1991, p 102.
- 15 *Ib*, p 102.
- 16 The work in question appears to be *A Serious Exhortation to Repentance and Sorrow for Sin, and A Strict and Mortified Life* (written about the middle of the fourth century and translated into English in 1731). See Robert G Tuttle Jr, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology* (The Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1978), p 152.
- 17 Charles Delamotte had sailed with the Wesleys to Georgia in 1735.
- 18 Sophia Hopkey would have been about eighteen when she met John Wesley, fifteen years her senior, in 1736. John contemplated marriage with her, but lost her affections through his vacillation.
- 19 *John Wesley's Journal*, 4 March 1747 (Standard Edition, Vol 3:284)
- 20 See Robert G Tuttle Jr, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology* (The Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1978), p 152.
- 21 *The Wesleyan Heritage: Essays of Albert C Outler* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1991, p 121.
- 22 *Charles Wesley's Journal* (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 47).
- 23 Geoffrey Wainwright, "Our Elder Brethren Join: The Wesleys' *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* and the Patristic Revival in England", *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society*, Volume I, 1994, p 11.
- 24 John Wesley's Letters, vol 1, p 367. Since we have mentioned "the diligent study of the Fathers, from Ignatius to Athanasius", it can be added that Charles's line, "My Lord, my Love is crucified" (*H&P* 175(3)) seems to be inspired by Ignatius, "My love is crucified" (Ignatius to the Romans, 7:20)).
- 25 Frances Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom* (The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation Ltd, 1979), pp 194-195.
- 26 *Ib*, p 202.
- 27 *Ib*, pp 195 and 205.
- 28 *Ib*, p 204.
- 29 *Ib*, p 211.
- 30 *Ib*, pp 209-211.

31 *Ib*, p 298.
 32 *PW* Volume 7, p 394 (Preparation for Death, 1772).
 33 *H&P* 148 (*H&SP* 1749).
 34 *H&P* 150 (*H&SP* 1749).
 35 Randy L Maddox, *John Wesley's Practical Theology*, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee
 1994, p 112.
 36 "Father, Son and Holy Ghost,/ In council join again,/To restore thine image lost/ By frail,
 apostate man..." (*PW* Volume 9, page 3; *SH* 1762).
 37 "Till all my hallowed soul be thine, /Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea, /And lost in thy
 immensity".
 (*H&P* 282(3); *H&SP* 1739). Benjamin Drewery has argued that Charles Wesley's desire to
 know God's life is "very different from sharing his being" (*Christian Spirituality*, ed. Peter
 Brooks, SCM Press London, 1975, p 58); but I agree with Gordon Wakefield that there is
 plenty of evidence that Wesley *does* want to share God's being, as seen in the hymn just quoted
 and in phrases like "transcripts of the Trinity" - see below, p 234.
 38 John McIntyre, *St Anselm and his Critics*, Oliver & Paul, Edinburgh, 1954, p 99.
 39 *Ib*, p 196.
 40 *Ib*, p 197.
 41 *Ib*, p 157. "Seeing that sin against God eternal and infinite must needs be an infinite wrong;
 justice in regard thereof doth necessarily exact an infinite recompense, or else inflict upon the
 offeror infinite punishment. Now because God was thus to be satisfied, and man not able to
 make satisfaction in such sort, his unspeakable love and inclination to save mankind from eternal
 death ordained on our behalf a Mediator, to do that which had been for any other impossible.
 Wherefore all sin is remitted in the only faith of Christ's passion, and no man without belief
 thereof justified." (Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book VI, Keble 1888
 edition, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p 71).
 42 John McIntyre, *St Anselm and his Critics*, Oliver & Paul, Edinburgh, 1954, pp 199-201.
 43 Norman Mable, *Popular Hymns and their Writers*, Independent Press, London, 1951.
 44 Sermon 21, para I.6.
 45 John McIntyre, *St Anselm and his Critics*, Oliver & Paul, Edinburgh, 1954, p 127.
 46 Samuel Wesley, *Advice to a Young Clergyman*, ed. John Wesley, 1735, p 43.
 47 *PW* Volume 12, p 99 (*SH* 1762). The full text of this hymn is at Appendix A.
 48 *PW* Volume 7, p 338.
 49 *Charles Wesley's Journal*, 17 May 1738 (Jackson edition, Volume 1, p 88).
 50 John Wesley's Journal, 15 June 1741 (Standard Edition, Vol 2:467).
 51 John Wesley's Journal, 16 June 1741 (Standard Edition, Vol 468).
 52 See Richard D Marius, Martin Luther, Harvard University Press, 1999, p 103; also Nigel
 Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason*, Paternoster
 Press, Carlisle, 1997. Atkinson says: "But Luther is prepared in other passages to speak highly
 of reason's ability and of its essential goodness. He sees it as a gift of God who has given
 mankind reason as 'the head and substance of all things' and as something divine" (p 19).
 53 See above, page 147.
 54 Alister McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, Basil Blackwell, London, 1985, pp 147.
 55 Alister McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, Basil Blackwell, London, 1985, pp 165.
 56 Alister McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, Basil Blackwell, London, 1985, pp 149ff.
 57 Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1953, p 208.
 58 See Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative* (trans. David Lewis), SCM Press, London, 1967,
 p 73; Luther Werke Vol. 40 II p 3.
 59 G W H Lampe, *The Atonement: Law and Love in Soundings*, CUP 1962, pp 185-186.
 60 Luther's Works, 5.162.21.
 61 Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, SCM Press, London, 1974, p 60.
 62 Luther's Works, 57.196.5; Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God*, Hodder & Stoughton,
 London, 1953, p 210.
 63 Luther's Works, 57.185.21; Gordon Rupp, *ib*, p 210.
 64 See Warren McWilliams, *The Passion of God*, Mercer University Press, Macon GA, 1985, p
 14.
 65 Franz Hildebrandt, *From Luther to Wesley*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1951, p 36. Hildebrandt
 does not venture outside *The Methodist Hymn Book*, so his ability to compare Charles's thought
 with Luther's is restricted.

66 *Hymns & Psalms* 287 (H&SP 1739).
 67 H&SP 1742.
 68 H&SP 1749.
 69 MHB 376 (PW Volume 4 pp 235-237: H&SP 1749).
 70 PW Volume 4, p 322 (H&SP 1749).
 71 PW Volume 9, p 420, no. 1161 (SH 1762).
 72 *Ib*, no. 1162 (SH 1762).
 73 *Ib*, no. 1163 SH 1762).
 74 *Charles Wesley's Journal* (Jackson ed), 1:225.
 75 See Alister McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985, pp 172-173.
 76 PW Volume 7, p 394 (Preparation for Death, 1772).
 77 See below, p 222.
 78 *The Creative Suffering of God* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), pp 14-15 and 176. The other streams are: process philosophy, which sees God creating from inside the community of the world rather than from outside, so that divine suffering is central to divine action; "The Death of God", a movement which in itself can be said to have died, though its heirs "feel the irrelevance to our modern culture of an objectively existing personal God"; classical theism, whose exponents are often "offended by what they feel to be parodies of an apathetic and aloof God attributed to the Fathers and Scholastics of the Church".
 79 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, SCM, London, 1974, p 201.
 80 *Ib*, p 205.
 81 *Windows on the Cross*, DLT, London, 1995, p 68.
 82 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, SCM, London, 1974, p 24.
 83 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Volume II, 2, 123.
 84 The six theologians in question are the German Jürgen Moltmann; the Black American James Cone; Geddes MacGregor; Daniel Day Williams; the Japanese Kazoh Kitamori; and the Korean Jung Young Lee. I have looked in detail at Moltmann, MacGregor, and Kitamori.
 85 Hans Küng, *The Incarnation of God* (translated by J R Stephenson), T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1987, pp 518-525.
 86 See Warren McWilliams, *The Passion of God*, Mercer University Press, Macon GA, 1985, pp 13-14.
 87 *Ib*, p 17. However, Geddes MacGregor states that in his book *Suffering and God*, published in 1926, the year after his death, von Hügel "shows how seriously he questioned the traditional notion of divine impassibility". (*He Who Lets Us Be*, Seabury Press, New York, 1975).
 88 Alister McGrath, *The Enigma of the Cross*, Hodder & Stoughton, London (2nd ed. 1996), pp 121-122.
 89 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, SCM, London, 1974, p 278.
 90 St Augustine, *Contra Adversarium Legis et Prophetarum*, I 40.
 91 William Temple, *The Preacher's Theme Today*, p 62; *Readings in St John's Gospel* (2nd Series), MacMillan & Co, London, p 385.
 92 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, SCM, London, 1974, p 272.
 93 Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God*, SCM Press, London, 1966, p 8.
 94 *Ib*, p 59.
 95 *Ib*, p 153.
 96 *Ib*, p 40.
 97 *Ib*, p 45.
 98 *Ib*, p 115.
 99 *Ib*, p 34.
 100 "Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Saviour of Israel."
 101 Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God*, SCM Press, London, 1966, p 45, quoting Luther WA v 45, p 415.
 102 *Ib*, p 108.
 103 *Ib*, p 77.
 104 Geddes MacGregor, *He Who Lets Us Be*, Seabury Press, New York, 1975.
 105 *Ib*, p 80.
 106 *Ib*, p 107.
 107 *Ib*, p 4.
 108 *Ib*, p 56.
 109 Quoted *ib*, p 74.

110 Quoted *ib*, p 120.
 111 *Ib*, p 126.
 112 *Ib*, p 150.
 113 *Ib*, p 180.
 114 *Ib*, p 178.
 115 *Ib*, p 182.
 116 Acts 17:28; Paul is quoting the Cretan poet Epimenides.
 117 John Robinson, *Honest to God*, SCM Press, London, 1963, p 41.
 118 Edward Farley, *Divine Empathy: A Theology of God*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1966, p 144.
 119 Dorothee Sölle, Chapter on "God's Pain and Our Pain", in Volume 3 of *Remembering for the Future*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp 2732-33.
 120 *ib*, p 2736.
 121 Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God*, SCM Press, London, 1966, pp 101-103.
 122 Letter to Mrs Pendarves dated 19 June 1731. Wesley did not alter his views on this.
 123 Christopher Bryant, *Jung and the Christian Way*, DLT London, 1983, p 80.
 124 Paul S Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, DLT London, 1989, p 10.
 125 *Ib*, p 110.
 126 *Ib*, p 148, quoting Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Volume II, p 113..
 127 Daniel Day Williams, *What Present Day Theologians Are Thinking*, Harper & Row, New York, 3rd ed. 1967, p 172.
 128 *SH* 1762.
 129 *PW* Volume 7, p 209 (*TH* 1767).
 130 J E Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, Epworth Press, London, 1941, p 144.
 131 Warren McWilliams, *The Passion of God*, Mercer University Press, Macon GA, 1985, p 163.
 132 *H&SP* 1739. This hymn has been said by Oliver Beckerlegge to condense "the whole kenosis doctrine in a single line" (*Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, ed. Watson and Trickett, Methodist Publishing House, 1988, p 152).
 133 *Hymns & Psalms* 101(2) (*NH* 1744).
 134 *NH* 1744.
 135 Donald G Dawe, *The Form of A Servant*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963, p 84.
 136 Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God*, SCM Press, London, 1966, p 71.
 137 *Hymns & Psalms* 733, "Jesus has died that I might live" (*H&SP* 1742).
 138 *PW* Volume 4, p 322-323 (*H&SP* 1749).
 139 *PW* Volume 7, p 65, "Jesus we ask thy promised aid" (*FH* 1767) .
 140 St Augustine, in Henry Bettenson, *The Later Christian Fathers*, OUP 1972, p 220.
 141 *PW* Volume 9, pp 3, 2, 18, 64 (*SH* 1762).
 142 See *The Trinity in the New Testament* by Arthur W Wainwright, SPCK, London, 1962, pp 7 and 13. My impression is that most modern theologians see the three Persons as reflecting the different ways in which we experience God, rather than the internal structure of the Godhead; the latter may indeed be far beyond our comprehension.
 143 *Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 1992, Volume 2, no 119.
 144 *PW* 9 no 1024 (*SH* 1762).
 145 *MHB* 487 (*H&SP* 1749).
 146 *Hymns & Psalms* 109(4) (*NH* 1744).
 147 *PW* Volume 5, p 148 (*H&SP* 1749).
 148 *PW* Volume 4 p 340 (*H&SP* 1742).
 149 *PW* Volume 3, p 299-300 (*HoLS* 1745).
 150 *Hymns & Psalms* 318 (*SH* 1762)
 151 *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, ed S T Kimbrough Jr, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, pp 104-105.
 152 I have commented on their difference of approach in Chapter 1, page 19 and note 103, and in Appendix C.
 153 *SH* 1762
 154 *H&P* 46 (*H&SP* 1742).
 155 *H&P* 47, "What shall I do, my God to love" (*H&SP* 1742). Wesley originally wrote "height and depth of love divine".
 156 *H&P* 184(5), "With glorious clouds encompassed round" (*HF* 1767).

- 157 *Theology in Hymns?* trans. Timothy E Kimbrough, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press,
Nashville, Tennessee, 1995, p 150.
- 158 *H&P* 300 (*HPT* 1746).
- 159 Berger, op cit, p 151.
- 160 *H&P* 282, "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire, Come, and in me delight to rest", v 3
(*H&SP* 1739).
- 161 Hymn on the death of Mrs L____ [Lefevre?] in *The Life of the Rev Charles Wesley*, ed. Thomas
Jackson, John Mason, London, 1841.
- 162 Verse 7 of "Sinners turn; why will ye die?"; *PW Volume* 3, p 84 (*HoGEL* 1741).
- 163 Verse 4 of "All wise, all-good, almighty Lord"; *PW Volume* 4, p 120 (*NH* 1744).
- 164 *PW Volume* 7, pp 314-315 (*HT* 1767).
- 165 *PW Volume* 5, p 328 (*H&SP* 1749).
- 166 *PW Volume* 7, p 266 (*HT* 1768).
- 167 *Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood Books,
Nashville, Tennessee 1992, Volume 2, no 119.
- 168 Cyprian Smith, *The Way of Paradox*, DLT London 1987, p 52.
- 169 *H&P* 536 (*H&SP* 1742).
- 170 *H&P* 241 (*HIAM* 1758).
- 171 *H&P* 216 (*H&SP* 1739).
- 172 *H&P* 745 (*SH* 1762).

APPENDIX A

HYMNS TO ILLUSTRATE CHARLES WESLEY'S DOCTRINE

1. 'TIS FINISHED! THE MESSIAS DIES!

Several references have been made to this hymn, first published in *SH* (1762), and it seems desirable to print it in full. The imagery is rich and varied, and summarises his thought on the atonement more than any other hymn. In general, the more legalistic concepts predominate; nevertheless, after stressing that "Justice divine is satisfied", Wesley makes it clear that it is God who has died for a guilty world. In this, we can see the similarity with Hymns & Psalms 166, "God of unexampled grace", which is more congenial to modern thought and, unlike the hymn below, is still sung. Note that verses 5 and 7 appear only in the version printed in *Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley*.

1. 'Tis finished! The Messiah dies,
Cut off for sins, but not his own:
Accomplished is the sacrifice,
The great redeeming work is done.
2. 'Tis finished! All the debt is paid;
Justice divine is satisfied;
The grand and full atonement made;
God for a guilty world hath died.
3. The veil is rent in Christ alone;
The living way to heaven is seen;
The middle wall is broken down,
And all mankind may enter in.
4. The types and figures are fulfilled
Exacted is the legal pain;
The precious promises are sealed;
The spotless lamb of God is slain.
5. Finished the first transgression is,
And purged the guilt of actual sin,
And everlasting righteousness
Is now to all the world brought in.
6. The reign of sin and death is o'er,
And all may live from sin set free;
Satan hath lost his mortal power;
'Tis swallowed up in victory.
7. 'Tis finished! All my guilt and pain,
I want no sacrifice beside;
For me, for me, the Lamb was slain;
'Tis finished! I am justified!
8. Saved from the legal curse I am,
My Saviour hangs on yonder tree:
See there the meek, expiring Lamb!
'Tis finished! He expires for me.

9. Accepted in the Well-beloved,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
I see the bar to heaven removed;
And all thy merits, Lord, are mine.
10. Death, hell, and sin are now subdued;
All grace is now to sinners given;
And lo, I plead the atoning blood,
And in thy right I claim my heaven!

2. GOD OF ALL POWER, AND TRUTH, AND GRACE

This hymn first appeared in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in 1742, and was entitled "Pleading the Promise of Sanctification"; it was based on Ezekiel 36:23-28. It has the distinction of being appended, in its totality, to John Wesley's "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", and to his Sermon 35, "Christian Perfection", under the head "The Promise of Sanctification".

The verses which now appear in *Hymns & Psalms* 726 are shown in bold. The 1933 *Methodist Hymn Book* included verses 1, 3, 7, 8 and 14.

1. **God of all power, and truth, and grace,
Which shall from age to age endure;
Whose word, when heaven and earth shall pass,
Remains and stands for ever sure:**
2. Calmly to thee my soul looks up,
And waits thy promises to prove;
The object of my steadfast hope,
The seal of thine eternal love.
3. **That I thy mercy may proclaim,
That all mankind thy truth may see,
Hallow thy great and glorious name,
And perfect holiness in me.**
4. Chose from the world, if now I stand
Adorned in righteousness divine;
If, brought unto the promised land,
I justly call the Saviour mine:
5. Perform the work thou hast begun,
My inmost soul to thee convert:
Love me, for ever love thine own,
And sprinkle with thy blood my heart.
6. **Thy sanctifying Spirit pour,
To quench my thirst and wash me clean:
Now, Father, let the gracious shower
Descend, and make me pure from sin.**
7. Purge me from every sinful blot;
My idols all be cast aside;
Cleanse me from every evil thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.

8. **Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free;
The mind that was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to thee.**
9. O take this heart of stone away!
(Thy rule it doth not, cannot own;)
In me no longer let it stay;
O take away this heart of stone!
10. The hatred of my carnal mind
Out of my flesh at once remove;
Give me a tender heart, resigned,
And pure, and filled with faith and love.
11. Within me thy good Spirit place,
Spirit of health, and love, and power;
Plant in me thy victorious grace,
And sin shall never enter more.
12. Cause me to walk in Christ my way,
And I thy statutes shall fulfil;
In every point thy law obey,
And perfectly perform thy will.
13. Hast thou not said, who canst not lie,
That I thy law should keep and do?
Lord, I believe, though men deny:
They all are false; but thou art true.
14. **O that I now, from sin released,
Thy word might to the utmost prove!
Enter into the promised rest,
The Canaan of thy perfect love!**
15. There let me ever, ever dwell;
Be thou my God, and I will be
Thy servant: O set to thy seal!
Give me eternal life in thee.
16. From all remaining filth within
Let me in thee salvation have:
From actual and from inbred sin,
My ransomed soul persist to save.
17. Wash out my old original stain;
Tell me no more it cannot be,
Demons or men! The Lamb was slain,
His blood was all poured out for me!
18. Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my heart:
One drop of thy all-cleansing blood
Shall make my sinfulness depart,
And fill me with the life of God.
19. Father, supply my every need;
Sustain the life thyself hast given;
Call for the corn, the living bread,
The manna that comes down from heaven.
20. The gracious fruits of righteousness,
Thy blessings' unexhausted store,
In me abundantly increase;
Nor let me ever hunger more.

21. Let me no more in deep complain,
"My leanness, O my leanness!" cry;
Alone consumed with pining want,
Of all my Father's children I!
22. The painful thirst, the fond desire,
Thy joyous presence shall remove;
While my full soul doth still require
The whole eternity of love.
23. Holy, and true, and righteous Lord,
I wait to prove thy perfect will;
Be mindful of thy gracious word,
And stamp me with thy Spirit's seal!
24. Thy faithful mercies let me find,
In which thou causest me to trust;
Give me thy meek and lowly mind,
And lay my spirit in the dust.
25. Show me how foul my heart hath been,
When all renewed by grace I am;
When thou hast emptied me of sin,
Show me the fulness of my shame.
26. Open my faith's interior eye,
Display thy glory from above;
And all I am shall sink and die,
Lost in astonishment and love.
27. Confound, o'erpower me, with thy grace;
I would be by myself abhorred;
(All might, all majesty, all praise,
All glory be to Christ my Lord!).
28. **Now let me gain perfection's height!
Now let me into nothing fall!
Be less than nothing in thy sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all!**

3. O THOU WHO AT THY CREATURE'S BAR

This hymn was written in 1749 "For a person called forth to bear his testimony" and is quoted by Thomas Jackson in his *Life of Charles Wesley*, Volume I, page 543-545. Verses 3 and 4 are a good summary of his views on the atonement. We can notice the emphasis on universal atonement (for "all mankind" and "me"); the transactional language "Surety", "offering", and "debt"; the blood which buys mankind, sprinkles us, and is "applied by faith"; and the affirmation that we can be saved to the uttermost from the root of sin.

3. Slain for a sinful world, and me,
Our Surety hung upon the tree;
Thy body bore our guilty load:
My lamb for sin an offering made,
The debt of all mankind hath paid,
And bought and sprinkled us with blood.

That blood applied by faith I feel,
 And come its healing power to tell,
 Through which I *know* my sins forgiven;
 A witness I that all may find
 The peace deserved for all mankind,
 And walk with God, my God, to heaven.

4. I come to testify the grace
 My Lord obtained for all our race,
 Enough ten thousand worlds to save;
 Salvation is in Jesu's name,
 Which every soul of man may claim,
 And all that seek the grace shall have:
 Salvation from the power of sin,
 Salvation from the root within,
 Salvation unto perfect love,
 (Thy grace to all hath brought it near,)
 An uttermost salvation here,
 Salvation up to heaven above.

4. WOULD THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND

This appeared as no. 131 in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745). There are many ideas characteristic of Charles Wesley here. First, the idea is conveyed that we ourselves are present at Calvary and as more than standers-by; it is with the eyes of faith that we see him. Next comes the imagery of sacrifice, recalling Leviticus 8:14b, "and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock of the sin offering". However, it is made clear that we offer ourselves with the sacrifice, that we "die while Jesus dies". We are to be so identified with his suffering that we "*feel* the lovely Victim bleed" and *feel* his mortal wound". He died (of course) *for all*; likewise the virtue - that is, the efficacy - of his blood *all* may know. Finally, we share the death not just of Jesus as a man but of God, "the dying God", and with him we are crucified.

1. Would the Saviour of mankind
 Without his people die?
 No, to him we all are joined
 As more than standers by.
 Freely as the Victim came
 To the altar of his cross,
 We attend the slaughtered Lamb
 And suffer for his cause.
2. Him even now by faith we see:
 Before our eyes he stands!
 On the suffering Deity
 We lay our trembling hand,
 Lay our sins upon his head,
 Wait on the dread sacrifice,
 Feel the lovely Victim bleed,
 And die while Jesus dies!

3. Sinners see, he dies for all,
And feel his mortal wound,
Prostrate on your faces fall,
And kiss the hallowed ground;
Hallowed by the streaming blood,
Blood, whose virtue all may know,
Sharers with the dying God,
And crucified below.
4. Sprinkled with the blood we lie,
And feel its cleansing power,
Crying in the Spirit's cry,
Our Saviour we adore!
Jesus, Lord, whose cross we bear,
Let thy death our sins destroy,
Make us who thy sorrows share
Partakers of thy joy.

5. LORD, UNTO ME THE KNOWLEDGE GRANT

I have chosen this to illustrate Wesley's doctrine of justification and (more especially) perfection, and the work of Christ and his Holy Spirit. It is a commentary on 1 John 3:16, and was first published in *SH* 1762: no. 3407 on p 203 of *PW* Volume 13. He wants the faith in the blood of Christ which gives him the assurance of pardon; he wants to be born again of the Spirit, but in the sense that he can sin no more. Through the indwelling of Christ, who is himself the fulness of God, he can go on to perfection until the moment of death when "faith is swallowed up in sight" (a favourite Wesleyan phrase).

1. Lord, unto me the knowledge grant,
Which, incompatible with sin,
Supplies my spirit's every want,
Brings the celestial nature in;
My heart renews and purifies,
And fills with life that never dies.
2. I want the faith in Jesu's blood
Which pardon on my conscience seals,
Imparts the spotless mind of God,
The plague original expels;
Doth all my unbelief remove,
And sweetly work by perfect love.
3. I would be of thy Spirit born,
And find that I can sin no more;
My soul into thy likeness turn,
Wisdom of God, and Truth, and Power,
Fulness of the Divinity,
Jesus, appear and dwell in me.
4. Then, only then my God I know,
Divinely taught, divinely pure:
Yet onward to perfection go.
And happy to the end endure,
Till faith is swallowed up in sight,
In glorious, full, eternal light.

6. YE THAT PASS BY, BEHOLD THE MAN

J R Watson, in *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study*, refers to “these Flemish or Gothic pictures of the life of Christ”, and quotes this hymn. Its omission from the hymn books - beginning even in 1877 - is hardly to be lamented, but it epitomises Wesley’s appeal to the emotions in hymns about the crucifixion. It is in this way very reminiscent of Dinah Morris’s sermon quoted on page 137. The theme of Representation emerges in verses 9 and 10.

1. Ye that pass by, behold the Man,
The Man of griefs condemned for you!
The Lamb of God, for sinners slain,
Weeping to Calvary pursued!
2. See, how his back the scourges tear,
While to the bloody pillar bound!
The ploughers make long furrows there,
Till all his body is one wound.
3. Nor can he thus their hate assuage;
His innocence, to death pursued,
Must fully glut their utmost rage -
Hark! How they clamour for his blood!
4. To us our own Barabbas give,
Away with him (they loudly cry),
Away with him, not fit to live,
The vile seducer crucify!
5. His sacred limbs they stretch, they tear,
With nails they fasten to the wood
His sacred limbs - exposed, and bare,
Or only covered with his blood.
6. See there! his temples crowned with thorn!
His bleeding hands extended wide!
His streaming feet, transfixed, and torn!
The fountain gushing from his side!
7. Where is the King of glory now?
The everlasting Son of God?
The Immortal hangs his languid brow;
The Almighty faints beneath his load.
8. Beneath my load he faints, and dies;
I filled his soul with pangs unknown;
I caused those mortal groans, and cries;
I killed the Father’s only Son!
9. O thou dear suffering Son of God!
How doth thy heart to sinners move!
Help me to catch thy precious blood,
Help me to taste thy dying love!
10. Give me to feel thine agonies,
One drop of thy sad cup afford!
I fain with thee would sympathize,
And share the sufferings of my Lord.

11. The earth could to her centre quake,
Convulsed, while her Creator died;
O let my inmost nature shake,
And die with Jesus crucified!
12. At thy last gasp the graves displayed
Their horrors to the open skies;
O that my soul might burst the shade,
And quickened by thy death arise!
13. The rocks could feel thy powerful death,
And tremble, and asunder part;
O rend with thine expiring breath
The harder marble of my heart!
14. My stony heart thy voice shall rent (*sic*),
Thou wilt, I trust, the veil remove;
My inmost bowels shall resent
The yearnings of thy dying love.
15. The grave I surely shall receive;
Thy death hath bought the grace for me,
This is my whole desire, to live -
To live, and then to die in thee.

APPENDIX B

THE HYMNS OF CHARLES WESLEY: REFERENCING

Charles Wesley's hymns can be referred to in many different ways. For the general reader, reference to *Hymns & Psalms* (1983) is likely to be the most convenient for hymns still sung today. Many readers will also have access to its predecessor, *The Methodist Hymn Book* (1933). Earlier single-volume collections are the 1780 book and the 1877 one, which broadly reproduced it with some additional hymns.

Many of the hymns I have referred to are not in any of these. Volumes of hymns were published at intervals during Wesley's lifetime (for instance, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, 1745). A century or more later, these were collected into *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (1868). There remained *unpublished* hymns, which are now accessible through *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley* (1992). Frank Baker refers to 68 printed sources (of which 62 were published in Charles's lifetime), and 49 manuscript ones.¹

The Poetical Works is not itself an entirely satisfactory publication to work from. It runs to thirteen volumes, and an index to each verse is provided for each volume separately at the end of Volume 13. Each reference therefore entails a hunt in up to thirteen different lists. However, since the first lines of hymns in volumes 1 to 8 are not indexed in Volume 13 but at the end of the volumes themselves, there can be as many as 21 places to look in! A truly comprehensive index, preferably on CD-ROM, would therefore be a great help to the scholar.

If we need to date a hymn, *The Poetical Works* is again not a very helpful method of reference. We have to go back to the underlying publication and find when that was published: for instance, *Hymns on the Trinity* date from 1767. I am therefore including a table below of the original publications and their relationship to *The Poetical Works*.

¹ *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, Epworth Press, London, 1962, p 387.

Original Publication

Publication	Date	Place in <i>The Poetical Works</i>
<i>Collection of Psalms and Hymns I (CPHI)</i>	1738 ²	
<i>Hymns and Sacred Poems (H&SP)</i>	1739	Volume 1
<i>Hymns and Sacred Poems (H&SP)</i>	1740	Volume 1
<i>Collection of Psalms and Hymns II (CPHII)</i>	1741	Volume 8
<i>Hymns on God's Everlasting Love (HoGEL)</i>	1741	Volume 3
<i>Hymns and Sacred Poems (H&SP)</i>	1742	Volume 2
<i>Moral and Sacred Poems</i>	1744	Volume 3
<i>Hymns on the Lord's Supper (HoLS)</i>	1745	Volume 3
<i>Gloria Patri (GP)</i>	1746	Volume 3
<i>Graces</i>	1746	Volumes 3 and 4
<i>For Thanksgiving Day</i>	1746	Volume 4
<i>Hymns on the Nativity (NH)</i>	1746	Volume 4
<i>Hymns on the Ascension</i>	1746	Volume 4
<i>Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the promise of the Father (HPT)</i>	1746	Volume 4
<i>Hymns for our Lord's Resurrection (HLR)</i>	1746	Volume 4
<i>Funeral Hymns I (FUI)</i>	1746	Volume 6
<i>Hymns for those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ (RH)</i>	1747	Volume 4
<i>Hymns and Sacred Poems (H&SP)</i>	1749	Volumes 4 and 5
<i>Hymns for New Year's Day</i>	1750	Volume 6
<i>Epistles to John Wesley and George Whitefield</i>	1755	Volume 6
<i>Hymns for Preachers</i>	1758	Volume 6
<i>Hymns of Intercession for all Mankind (HIAM)</i>	1758	Volume 6
<i>Hymns for Thanksgiving Day</i>	1759	Volume 6
<i>Funeral Hymns II (FUII)</i>	1759	Volume 6
<i>Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures (SH)</i>	1762	Volumes 9 to 13
<i>Hymns for Children (HC)</i>	1763	Volume 7
<i>Hymns for Families (FH)</i>	1767	Volume 7
<i>Hymns on the Trinity (HT)</i>	1767	Volume 7
<i>Preparation for Death (PD)</i>	1772	Volume 7
Various	1780-85	Volume 8

²Does not include any hymns by Charles Wesley.

APPENDIX C: AUTHORSHIP OF THE HYMNS

I referred, in Chapter 1 (pages 19-20), to the problem of deciding whether a given hymn written before 1749 and published jointly by John and Charles Wesley could confidently be ascribed to Charles or not. My conclusion was that very few hymns were in fact written by John, and it was not necessary to exclude any significant number from my corpus. I was encouraged in this conclusion by the general consensus of scholarly opinion, especially in the last fifteen years or so. Nevertheless it may be appropriate for me to give more detailed reasons.

First of all, is there any principle on which we can identify the authorship? Most of the undoubted hymns from John's pen are translations, and by examining them Henry Bett¹ proposed some tests which seemed to distinguish his work from that of his brother:

1. A strong preference for the simpler poetic measures, particularly four-line or six-line stanzas of eight-syllabled lines.
2. A considerable use of lines rhymed consecutively.
3. A tendency to divide the octosyllabic line into equal clauses of four syllables, with a pause between.
4. A tendency to elaborate and repeat a thought.
5. A tendency to begin a succession of lines with a series of parallel expressions.
6. A habit of carrying over a sentence from one line to another.
7. A minor point: the last verse echoing the first.
8. Another minor point: the use of favourite words such as "duteous", "dauntless", "boundless".

Bett then added "some other critical canons":

9. Charles is very fond of compounds like "blood-besprinkled" and "all-victorious"; these are rare in John's work.
1. 10. Charles uses polysyllabic words such as "inextinguishable", "incomprehensibly" and (as Bernard Lord Manning reminds us)² "Those amaranthine bowers/ (Unalienably ours)". Most such words begin with "in-".
2. 11. John, on the other hand, prefers adjectives beginning with "un-", like "unchangeable" and "unbounded". (We should however add that Charles often refers to "joy unspeakable").
3. 12. John was fond of using triads of nouns, like "toil, and grief, and pain".³

4. 13. John's verse "often shows a certain stiffness of movement".
5. 14. John is inclined to clichés of the day like "the ethereal blue".
6. 15. John alone seems to use "I'd" or "I'll".

Bett concluded from these tests that most of the hymns were unquestionably the work of Charles. "Nine hymns out of ten in the *Collection* of 1780, tried by these tests, are clearly the work of the younger brother".⁴ He ventured a list of those which might be by John; they included the following:

Eternal beam of light divine
Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning Fire,
Come, and in me delight to rest.
Jesus, if still the same thou art
And can it be, that I should gain
Father, whose everlasting love.

I think Bett's "canons" are interesting as an attempt to approach the problem by way of concrete criteria rather than mere hunch. They have not, however, met with general acceptance. Baker says "I believe we should discount or at the very least treat with severe caution Dr Bett's 'canons' numbered 4, 5, 7, 9, and 12".⁵ Stylistic studies can yield strange results: the early stylistic studies of the Pauline letters declared all but four to be bogus, "a conclusion which carried no weight, except with its computer".⁶

We need to reckon with the fact that the two brothers had quite distinct personalities: Charles had a warmer temperament than John, and it was natural for him to write "My dear Redeemer's praise"⁷ which was altered - by John (says "Companion to Congregational Praise")⁸ - to "My great Redeemer's praise" in 1778; "My dear atoning Lamb!", altered to "The all-atoning Lamb";⁹ likewise, John probably omitted "Jesu, Lover of my soul" from the 1780 book because he disliked such terms of endearment.¹⁰ When Charles wrote some nativity hymns which his brother considered too sentimental, John said, "Omit one or two, and I will thank you. They are *namby-pambical*."¹¹ John's most vigorous attack on endearments was, however, delivered after Charles's death, in his Sermon 117, "On Knowing Christ After the Flesh".¹²

I have particularly endeavoured, in all the hymns which are addressed to our blessed Lord, to avoid every *fondling* expression, and to speak as to the most high God... Some will probably think

that I have been over-scrupulous with regard to one particular word, which I never use myself in verse or prose, in praying or preaching... It is the word *dear*... I have sometimes almost stopped singing, (even in the midst of my brother's excellent hymn,) "That dear disfigured face," or that glowing expression, "Drop thy warm blood upon my heart," lest it should seem to imply the forgetting I am speaking of "the Man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts".

He believed that this approach would not check the fervour of devotion, but *would* prevent:

loud shouting, horrid, unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times, jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms or legs, both of men and women, in a manner shocking not only to religion, but to common decency.¹³

Whether or not they contain terms of endearment, Charles's hymns are evidence of a strong personal devotion to Christ. A large number of them begin with an invocation: *Wesley's Hymns* has 71 hymns by one or other of the Wesleys (excluding translations) beginning "Jesus" or "Jesu". Admittedly, only 42 of these are certainly by Charles, but none are certainly by John. None of the three hymns which are generally ascribed to John ("Son of thy Sire's eternal love", "Eternal spotless Lamb of God", and "Father of all! whose powerful voice" - see below) begin this way.

Charles also had a more mystical outlook, as the disapproving quotation from John above shows. Admittedly, John was using "mystical" in a pejorative sense, with William Law, the Moravians, and "stillness" in mind; Charles was mystical in the sense of seeking unity with God. Thus he can write:

Swells my soul to compass thee,
Gasps in thee to live and move;
Filled with all the Deity,
All immersed and lost in love!¹⁴

Likewise, he writes (if we ignore Bett's lone attempt to attribute the hymn to John):

Eager for thee I ask and pant:
So strong, the principle divine
Carries me out with sweet constraint
Till all my hallowed soul is thine,
Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in thine immensity.¹⁵

Charles was more lyrical: Bett comments on the "certain stiffness of movement" in his brother's verse;¹⁶ and we have the feeling that John was essentially a prose writer venturing into verse, while only his brother was a true poet. An article in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* by B C Drury, discussing this question of authorship, considers that three hymns in the 1780 collection are indisputably John's, "Son of thy Sire's eternal love", "Eternal spotless Lamb of God", and "Father of all! whose powerful voice"; these are given in full below, with my comments. He concludes, "John Wesley's hymns are the products of craft rather than poetic inspiration... At every point they

evidence a careful, precise, academic mind... John Wesley's hymns do not soar like that of Charles, but then they never become florid or bombastic".¹⁷ (It is however worth noting that A S Gregory doubted the ascription of "Father of all! whose powerful voice" to John, and wrote in *Praises with Understanding*:

Father of all! whose powerful voice, from *Hymns & Sacred Poems*, 1742, is usually ascribed to him, but on quite inconclusive evidence. It was appended - but so too were several of his brother's hymns - to one of his sermons, with a note: "I believe it will not be unacceptable to the serious reader to subjoin a paraphrase on the Lord's Prayer".¹⁸)

Charles was fond of paradox, in contrast to John's more prosaic approach. "'Tis certain, though impossible"¹⁹ ; "Laughs at impossibilities/ And cries: "It shall be done";²⁰ "Our God contracted to a span/ Incomprehensibly made man";²¹ "Being's source begins to be/ And God himself is born".²²

Most students of Methodist hymnody will come to feel that they can detect Charles's personality rather than John's. The "*Companion to Hymns & Psalms*"²³ writes as follows about "And can it be that I should gain" (*Hymns & Psalms* 216):

There has been some speculation (see Henry Bett, "The Hymns of Methodism" (1945) p. 26) that this hymn was written by John Wesley; but it bears all the marks of Charles Wesley's poetic force and impassioned imagery...

The hymn is an extraordinary and daring tour-de-force, both poetically and theologically...

We may also observe the stunning paradox in verse 2 line 1: "the Immortal dies!"

Many of us will feel that John's temperament was a little too prosaic to have written it.²⁴

The Companion similarly says:

Attempts have been made to suggest that some of the work ascribed to Charles is actually by John, but the evidence is inconclusive, and verses such as John's revision of [number] 803 suggest a mind that was good at translation and emendation (as in the 1780 *Collection*) but lacking in poetic fire and originality. Until better evidence is forthcoming, Charles Wesley's hymns should continue to be ascribed to Charles.²⁵

The *Companion to Hymns & Psalms* does not suggest that either "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning Fire,/ Come, and in me delight to rest"²⁶ or "Father, whose everlasting love"²⁷ might have been written by John, though Bett may have been influenced in the latter hymn by "Immense, unfathomed, unconfined...Thy undistinguishing regard", and the language is more clinical than that Charles normally gives us. If any in the list is by John, this is the most likely.

The Introduction to *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of Christians* (the 1780 Hymn Book), by F Hildebrandt and Oliver A Beckerlegge takes a similar approach, and points out that "the ecstatic, rapturous exclamations that are so characteristic of Charles were

foreign to [John's] nature"; it concludes by asking, "Is a judgement based on a 'feel' (unless it is quite uninformed) for what is Charles's writing quite invalid?"²⁸

1. The hymns which are almost certainly certainly by John

There are only three of these in *Wesley's Hymns* (1877). Let us look at these in detail, noting in what respects they resemble his brother's style and in what they differ.

No. 235 (H&P 21)

1. Father of all! whose powerful voice
Called forth this universal frame;
Whose mercies over all rejoice,
Through endless ages still the same;
Thou by thy word upholdest all;
Thy bounteous love to all is showed,
Thou hear'st thy every creature's call,
And fillest every mouth with good.
2. In heaven thou reign'st enthroned in light,
Nature's expanse beneath thee spread,
Earth, air, and sea, before thy sight,
And hell's deep gloom, are open laid;
Wisdom, and might, and love are thine;
Prostrate before thy face we fall,
Confess thine attributes divine,
And hail the sovereign Lord of all.
3. Thee, sovereign Lord, let all confess
That moves in earth, or air, or sky,
Revere thy power, thy goodness bless,
Tremble before thy piercing eye;
All ye who owe to him your birth,
In praise your every hour employ:
Jehovah reigns! be glad, O earth!
And shout, ye morning stars, for joy!

This hymn certainly, like so many of Charles's, begins with an invocation; but it is to the Father, and not, as is characteristic of Charles's hymns, to the Son. It is in fact very reminiscent of Isaac Watts in its adoration of God as Creator: we think of "give to our God immortal praise"²⁹ or "God is a name my soul adores".³⁰

No. 236

1. Son of thy Sire's eternal love,
Take to thyself thy mighty power,
Let all earth's sons thy mercy prove,
Let all thy bleeding grace adore;
The triumphs of thy love display,
In every heart reign thou alone,
Till all thy foes confess thy sway,
And glory ends what grace begun.

2. Spirit of grace, and health, and power,
Fountain of light and love below,
Abroad thy healing influence shower,
O'er all the nations let it flow;
Inflame our hearts with perfect love,
In us the work of faith fulfil;
So not heaven's host shall swifter move
Than we on earth, to do thy will.
3. Father, 'tis thine alone to yield
Thy children's wants a fresh supply,
Thou cloth'st the lilies of the field
And hearest the young ravens cry:
On thee we cast our care; we live
Through thee, who know'st our every need;
O feed us with thy grace, and give
Our souls this day the living bread!

Again we think of Watts: "The beasts with food his hands supply/ And the young ravens when they cry";³¹ both writers have Psalm 147:9 in mind. Of course, the phrase "Inflame our hearts with perfect love" could have come from one of Charles's hymns - except that Charles would never have written *our* heart, only *my* heart. (I have discussed the use of "I" and "we" under No. 237 below).

No. 237

1. Eternal, spotless Lamb of God,
Before the world's foundation slain,
Sprinkle us ever with thy blood,
O cleanse, and keep us ever clean!
To every soul (all praise to thee!)
Our bowels of compassion move;
And all mankind by this may see
God is in us; for God is love.
2. Giver and Lord of life, whose power
And guardian care for all are free,
To thee, in fierce temptation's hour,
From sin and Satan let us flee;
Thine, Lord, we are, and our thou art,
In us be all thy goodness showed;
Renew, enlarge, and fill our heart
With peace, and joy, and heaven, and God.
3. Blessing and honour, peace and love,
Co-equal, co-eternal Three,
In earth below, and heaven above,
By all thy works be paid to thee!
Thrice Holy! thine the kingdom is,
The power omnipotent is thine,
And when created nature dies,
Thy never-ceasing glories shine.

This is the most interesting of the three. There is one phrase in it particularly reminiscent of Charles, "Renew, enlarge, and fill our heart", which of course is very close to

“Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart” in “Give me the faith which can remove”.³² It is however characteristic of John that it is *our* heart, while to Charles it is *my* heart; the first person plural occurs eight times in this hymn, while in Charles’s hymn the first person singular is used fourteen times. This tendency towards “I” has been examined in detail by Paul Ellingworth³³ (“I” and “We” in Charles Wesley’s Hymns”); he shows that the use of personal pronouns depends a great deal on context, but whereas in hymns for believers interceding for the world the “we” forms outnumber the “I” form by 29 to 3, in those which assert the faith of believers the “I” forms outnumber the “we” forms by 145 to 58. Isaac Watts tends to favour “we” forms by a majority of 47 to 28.³⁴

2. The hymns ascribed by Henry Bett to John

In Chapter 1 I referred to certain tests made by Henry Bett, from which he concluded that most of the hymns whose authorship would otherwise be doubtful were unquestionably the work of Charles. “Nine hymns out of ten in the *Collection* of 1780, tried by these tests, are clearly the work of the younger brother”³⁵. He ventured a list of those which might be by John; they included the following:

	<i>MHB</i>	<i>H&P</i>	<i>WH (1877)</i>
1. Father of lights, from whom proceeds	---	---	469
2. Fondly my foolish heart essays	---	---	291
3. Eternal beam of light divine	496	---	337
4. Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning Fire, Come, and my hallowed heart inspire	553	282	351
5. Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning Fire, Come, and in me delight to rest.	299	---	374
6. Jesus, thou knowest my simpleness	---	---	177
7. Jesus, if still the same thou art	349	529	134
8. Peace, doubting heart! My God’s I am!	500	---	272
9. My God, if I may call thee mine	---	---	290
10. And can it be, that I should gain	371	216	201
11. How do thy mercies close me round!	877	562	227
12. Father, whose everlasting love	75	520	39
13. Leader of faithful souls, and Guide	610	819	71
14. Thee will I praise with all my heart	80	41	545*
15. My heart is full of Christ, and longs	270	799	568
16. When Israel out of Egypt came	---	---	223*

* *Wesley’s Hymns (1877)* regards the authorship as indisputably that of Charles, presumably because the hymn is post-1749.

2. The hymns listed in *Hymns & Psalms* as of disputed authorship

4.	Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenings Fire, Come, and my hallowed heart inspire	553	282	351
7.	Jesus, if still the same thou art	349	529	134
11.	How do thy mercies close me round!	877	562	227
12.	Father, whose everlasting love	75	520	39
14.	Thee will I praise with all my heart	80	41	545*
15.	My heart is full of Christ, and longs	270	799	568
17.	I want the Spirit of power within	280	291	376*
18.	Father of everlasting grace	730	300	377

* See note above.

It will be seen that most of the *H&P* hymns in Bett's list appear as disputed above, except for 216, "And can it be"; on the other hand, two new hymns are included: 291, "I want the Spirit of power within", and 300, "Father of everlasting grace".

*The Companion to Hymns & Psalms*³⁶ has the following comments (or lack of comments) about those hymns above which appear in that book; I have added comments of my own under nos. 4 and 12:

4. Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenings Fire, Come, and my hallowed heart inspire 282

"The hymn is characterised by what J.E.Rattenbury (*The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (1941)) called 'the brooding thought' that shows 'the depths of Wesley's communion with the Holy Spirit of God' (p 179)". (I myself would add that it is surely an example of Charles's mystical approach, in which he writes "Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea/ And lost in thine immensity").

7. Jesus, if still the same thou art 529

"This is part of a very dramatic hymn, and the omitted verses are perhaps too intense for modern tastes... In Charles Wesley's brilliant rehandling [of the theme based on Matthew 5:3-4] the mourning is for Christ and the comforting comes from the Comforter..."

10. And can it be, that I should gain 216

"There has been some speculation (see Henry Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism* (1945) p. 26) that this hymn was written by John Wesley; but it bears all the marks of Charles

Wesley's poetic force and impassioned imagery... The hymn is an extraordinary and daring tour-de-force, both poetically and theologically... We may also observe the stunning paradox in verse 2 line 1: 'the Immortal dies!'"

11. How do thy mercies close me round!

562

No comment relevant to authorship.

12. Father, whose everlasting love

520

"The hymn shows Charles Wesley's fine range of adjectives, especially in verses 2 and 3; the last verse shows his imaginative skill which fuses the saying of Christ ('And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me') with the idea of the cross as a standard to which all may rally."

There is an interesting parallel between this hymn and one (headed "Universal Redemption") in *Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*:³⁷

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Father, whose everlasting love
Thy only Son for sinners gave,
Whose grace to all did freely move,
And sent him down the world to save: | 1. Saviour of all, whose bowels move
To all the souls thy hands have made,
Whose sovereign everlasting love
For all a bleeding ransom paid. |
| 2. Help us thy mercy to extol
Immense, unfathomed, unconfined,
To praise the Lamb who died for all,
The general Saviour of mankind. | 2. All-great, all glorious to redeem,
To thee my loftiest songs I raise,
Gladly resume my darling theme,
And glory in thy general grace. |
| 3. Thy undistinguishing regard
Was cast on Adam's fallen race;
For all thou hast in Christ prepared
Sufficient, sovereign, saving grace. | 3. I sing thy grace divinely free,
Let all mankind thy grace adore,
That vast unfathomable sea
Without a bottom or a shore. |
| 4. The world he suffered to redeem;
For all he hath the atonement made;
For those that will not come to him
The ransom of his life was paid. | 4. Not all the first-born sons of light
□Thy glorious grace can fully tell,
The length, and breadth, and depth, and height
Of love incomprehensible. |
| 5. Why, then, thou universal Love,
Should any of thy grace despair?
To all, to all, thy bowels move,
But straitened in our own we are. | 5. Thy love th'angelic army sings
And tremble at thy gracious power,
And wrap their faces in their wings,
And fall, and silently adore. |
| 6. Arise, O God, maintain thy cause!
The fullness of the Gentiles call;
Lift up the standard of thy cross,
And all shall own thou diedst for all. | 6. Like them I long on thee to gaze,
Like them before thy throne to fall,
With joy unutterable praise
The love divine that died for all. |

I have given the version of "Father, whose everlasting love" printed in *Wesley's Hymns* (1877), including the undistinguished fifth verse (now omitted; the original has in fact seventeen verses); "hath" in verse 4 is now "has", and "Gentiles" in verse 6 is now

“nations”. This hymn is addressed to the Father, the other to the Son; it is in the first person plural; and it is less high-flown in its language. All these would support Bett’s attribution to John, but otherwise the hymns are very similar. There are very clear parallels:

To all, to all, thy bowels move	Saviour of all, whose bowels move
The general Saviour of mankind.	And glory in thy general grace.
And all shall own thou diedst for all.	The love divine that died for all.
Whose grace to all did freely move,	Whose sovereign everlasting love
And sent him down the world to save:	For all a bleeding ransom paid.

The second hymn is certainly by Charles: it is, as I said, included in Unpublished *Poetry of Charles Wesley*, and in any case John would never have written about “my darling theme”. We could say that these hymns display the differences between the two brothers in writing on the same topic, but as regards “undistinguishing” and the triad “Immense, unfathomed, unconfined”, see 17 below. If the first hymn is to be attributed to John, it could well be his emendation of something written by Charles.

14. Thee will I praise with all my heart 41

Ascribed to Charles without comment.

15. My heart is full of Christ, and longs 799

No comment relevant to authorship.

17. I want the Spirit of power within 291

“Most of these amendments [ie to verses 2-4 as noted there] were made by John Wesley for the 1780 *Collection*. The hymn’s fine emotional ring of aspiration is characteristic of Charles Wesley. So is his use of triads: ‘power, love, health’; ‘pardon, peace, joys’; ‘love, heaven, God’; and his use of words of Latin derivation (‘indubitable’; ‘ascertains’). To this may be added the powerful use of metaphor in the images (verse 5) of the stamp, and the signature.”

18. Father of everlasting grace 300

“It... is one of Charles Wesley’s most powerful hymns for a people at worship”.

I can conclude by saying that examination of this list of hymns where authorship might be disputed has provided no reason to attribute any of them to John. In some cases, in fact, the argument for attributing them to Charles is very strong.

Notes to Appendix C

- 1 Henry Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism*, Epworth Press, London, 1945, p 21-25
- 2 Bernard Lord Manning, *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, Epworth Press, London, 1942, p 25.
- 3 See, however, my quotation below from *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, that triads are typical of Charles!
- 4 Henry Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism*, Epworth Press, London, 1945, p 25.
- 5 Frank Baker, *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, Epworth Press, London, 1962, p ix.
- 6 Robin Lane Fox, *Unauthorized Version*, Viking Press, Harmondsworth, 1991, p 135.
- 7 H&P 744(1), "O for a thousand tongues to sing" (H&SP 1740).
- 8 *Companion to Congregational Praise*, ed K L Parry, Independent Press, London, 1953.
- 9 H&P 325(3), "Spirit of faith, come down" (HPT 1746).
- 10 *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, ed. Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett, Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1988, p 312.
- 11 John Wesley's Letters, Volume iv 166, 26 Dec 1761; see also the article on Wesley and Ambrose Phillips by J Baird Ewens, *London Quarterly Review*, 1936, p 49. John's objection seems to have been to no. 6 of NH, where Charles invites us to "Gaze on that Helpless Object/ Of endless Adoration". It may also be noted that John toned down or omitted endearments from the Moravian hymns which he translated: thus he omitted "we kiss thy nail holes" and altered "with the kiss of faith" to "with the arms of faith". See John L Nuelsen, *John Wesley and the German Hymn*, A S Holbrook, Calverley, 1972, p 56.
- 12 *Works*, Volume 7, p 291; preached 15 August 1789.
- 13 This puts us in mind of an entry in his Journal for 27 August 1763, when he quoted a correspondent in Wales: "It is common in the congregations attended by WW and one or two other Clergymen, after the preaching is over, for anyone who has a mind, to give out a verse of a hymn. This they sing over and over again with all their might, perhaps thirty, yea forty, times. Meanwhile the bodies of two or three, sometimes ten or twelve, are violently agitated, and they leap up and down in all manner of postures, frequently for hours together." John took a fairly pragmatic attitude to such occurrences, and accepted that they were "honest, upright men, who really feel the love of God in their hearts"; but he was aware of the effect this might have on intending worshippers, and the dangers of being branded as an "enthusiast".
- 14 PW Volume 1 p 149, "Saviour, the world's and mine" (H&SP 1739).
- 15 H&P 282(3), "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire" (H&SP 1739).
- 16 On the other hand, Dr E M Hodgson, in an article "John - or Charles - Wesley" in *PWHS* Volume XLI (1977-78), argues that John is not as stiff, in relation to Charles, as Baker and Bett have made out. However, I do not find her argument forceful.
- 17 *PWHS* Volume XXXII, pp 133-135.
- 18 A S Gregory, *Praises with Understanding* (Epworth Press, second edition, 1949), p 37.
- 19 H&P 723(3), "All things are possible to them [originally *him*]" (H&SP 1749).
- 20 H&P 693(5), "Father of Jesus Christ - my Lord" (H&SP 1742).
- 21 H&P 109(1), "Let earth and heaven combine" (NH 1744).
- 22 H&P 101(2) (NH 1744).
- 23 *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, ed. Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett, Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1988, p 151.
- 24 An additional reason, not mentioned by Bett, for ascribing "And can it be" to John is that in one of his translations of German hymns John has the lines "No condemnation now I dread;/ I taste salvation in thy name,/ Alive in thee my living head!" But, as Teresa Berger points out, "Scholarship is no longer clear that John (and not his brother, Charles) actually translated all of these hymns, while on the other hand Charles made ready use of borrowed phrases from other poetry". (*Theology in Hymns?* trans. Timothy E Kimbrough, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995).
- 25 *Ib* p 607. The 803 referred to is George Herbert's "Teach me, my God and King": John wrote a replacement for the second (now omitted) verse, but his effort is described by the *Companion* as "flavourless beside Herbert's pithy original".
- 26 H&P 282 (H&SP 1739)
- 27 H&P 520 (HoGEL 1741).
- 28 *John Wesley's Works*, Volume 7.
- 29 *Hymns & Psalms* 22.
- 30 *Hymns & Psalms* 24.

- ³¹ *Hymns & Psalms* 338(4).
³² *Hymns & Psalms* 767(4).
³³ *London Quarterly Review* 1963, p 153.
³⁴ "'I' and 'We' in Charles Wesley's Hymns" by Paul Ellingworth, *London Quarterly Review*, 1963, p 153.
- ³⁶ *Companion to Hymns & Psalms*, Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough, 1988, p 151.
³⁷ *Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Volume III, pp 159-160.

APPENDIX D

CHARLES WESLEY BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. THE HYMNS

The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley (13 volumes, published 1868). This contains about 6500 hymns and poems.
Previously Unpublished Poems of Charles Wesley, ed. Kimbrough and Beckerlegge, Kingswood Books, Nashville, Tennessee 3 volumes, 1992.

B. WRITINGS BY THE WESLEYS AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

John Wesley's Journal (11 volumes, Standard Edition; 4 volumes, Everyman Edition). *I have given references by reference to the Standard Edition where possible.*

The Journal of Charles Wesley (Thomas Jackson ed). John Mason Publisher, London 1849; reprinted by Baker Book House 1980.

Sermons on Several Occasions by John Wesley (3 volumes, Wesleyan Conference Office, London 1874). *141 published sermons, as against the 44 generally read.*

Charles Wesley's Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons now for the first time transcribed from the original by Thomas R Albin and Oliver A Beckerlegge (WHS Occasional Publication 1987).

Note: of the 13 "Sermons of Charles Wesley" published in 1816, seven have recently been shown¹ to have been copied by Charles from his brother John's manuscripts. Moreover, doubts remain over the rest.²

The Arminian Magazine. This first appeared in 1778 and was edited by John Wesley. It was primarily intended as a counterblast to Calvinism, but articles on more general topics appear. It is of value here because it contains a great many accounts of early Methodist experience: John encouraged his followers to write to him about these, and the Magazine contains many from before 1788. Most of these accounts are of justification, sanctification, or the death-bed. It was published and bound annually up to 1798, after which it was renamed the Methodist Magazine, but I have used material included up to the 1791 volume (that being the year of John's death and a convenient cut-off point), as long as it predated Charles's own death on 29 March 1788.

Wesley's Notes on the New Testament Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, no date.
John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Epworth 1952 edition used).

C. LATER WRITINGS ABOUT THE WESLEYS AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

Baker, Frank: *William Grimshaw (1708-1763)*, Epworth Press, London, 1963.

Baker, Frank: *John Wesley and the Church of England*, Epworth Press, London, 1970.

Ted A Campbell, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change*, Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1991.

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APPENDIX E

Alphabetical list of hymns referred to

Notes:

1. Where a hymn is not by Charles Wesley, the author is given, and the lines shown in Geneva font.
2. Entries show:
 - the first line of the hymn in **bold**, followed by (a) the first line of the verse quoted, if this is not itself the first line of the hymn, or (b) any significant later words of the first verse. Examples:

(a)
A living principle of grace (v 3, Come then, the true celestial Vine)
 (b)
Adam descended from above, /Federal Head of all mankind
 - the *modern* source, if any (*H&P*, *MHB*) or the *PW/UPCW* reference, followed by the original source and date (e.g. HoLS 174). Example:

(c)
H&P 216 (*H&SP* 1739)
 (d)
PW Volume 9, p 415 (*SH* 1762)
 - the chapter and subject under which the hymn is quoted. For reasons of space, this has often been abbreviated. Example:

2.1 Wesley and Substitution
 (Shortened from “Wesley and the Doctrine of Substitution”).
 - Any *significant* scripture text. Example:
Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour - Isaiah 45:15
 References are always to the KJV unless the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) is specified.

3. Some hymns may be referred to in more than one chapter or subject. Example:

Father, see this living clod (v 4, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, In council join again) <i>PW</i> Volume 9, pp 2, 3, 18 and 64 (<i>SH</i> 1762)	2.1 Wesley and Substitution 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
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A living principle of grace (v 3, Come then, the true celestial Vine) <i>PW</i> Vol 9, p 255 (<i>SH</i> 1762 on Job 19:28)	5.1 Christ Died For All
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Adam descended from above , /Federal Head of all mankind <i>PW</i> Volume 9, p 415 (<i>SH</i> 1762)	2.3 Christ As Representative
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After we have endured a while , / The Lord rewards our patient toil <i>PW</i> Vol 9, p 158	6. Christian Perfection
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Ah, gentle, gracious Love (v 6, Sinners, abhor the fiend: His <i>other</i> gospel hear) <i>PW</i> Vol 3, p 66 (<i>HoGEL</i> 1741)	5.1 Christ Died For All
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All glory and praise (v 2, The Saviour hath died for me and for you) <i>PW</i> Vol 3, p 337 (<i>HoLS</i> 1745)	5.2 The Holy Spirit
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- Ah! Lord, regard my endless woe** (v 6, How many to the angelic foe)
PW Vol 5, p 247-248 (H&SP 1749) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- Ah! lovely Christlike soul, adieu!**
 (v 5, She was... A ... mirror of the Deity) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
PW Vol 6, pp 263-265
- Alas! by nature how depraved** (Newton) (v 5, Yet one more thing)
Olney Hymns II 29 5.2 The Holy Spirit
- All hail, Redeemer of Mankind** (v 2, Father, behold thy dying Son!)
PW Volume 3, p 308 (HoLS 1745) 3. The Cross as Ransom
- All power, authority, and grace** (v 2, ...Resides within my heart)
UPCW Vol 2, p 119 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- All praise to the Lamb** (verse 5, Not a doubt can arise)
PW Volume 5, p 25 (H&SP 1749). 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- All things are possible to him/** That can in Jesu's name believe
H&P 723 (H&SP 1749) 6. Christian Perfection
Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth - St Mark 9:23
- All wise, all-good, almighty Lord** (v 4, ... Incarnated in me)
PW Vol 4, p 120 (NH 1744). 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- All ye that pass by**
 (v 2, For what you have done... atone) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
 (v 3, For you and for me / He prayed on the tree) 4.3 Intercession
MHB 188, PW Volume 4, p 371 (H&SP 1749).
Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? - Lamentations 1:12
- Amazing love to mortals showed!**
 (v 4, The world to me is crucified) 2.3 Christ As Representative
PW Vol 3, p 318 (HoLS 1745)
And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts - Gal. 5:24
- An hidden God indeed thou art!**
PW Vol 9, p 420, no. 1162 (SH 1762) 7.3 Wesley and Luther
Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour - Isaiah 45:15
- And can it be, that I should gain /** An interest in the Saviour's blood
 Chapter 2 heading
 (v 5, Alive in him, my living Head) 2.3 Christ As Representative
 4.4 Blood
 (v 5, No condemnation now I dread) 5.2 The Holy Spirit
Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need - Hebrews 4:16
 (v 3, Emptied himself of all but love) 7.4 Modern Theology
[Christ Jesus] made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant - Phil 2:7
 7.5 Enduring Achievement
H&P 216 (H&SP 1739)

- And have I measured half my days**
(v 5, Nor can I yet behold his face)
PW Vol 4, pp 322-4 7.3 Wesley and Luther
- And let this feeble body fail** (verse 5, O what hath Jesus bought for me!)
PW Volume 6, p 219 (Funeral Hymns 1759) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- And shall not that atoning blood** /Of Christ, the everlasting God
PW Vol 13, p 139 (SH 1762) 4.4 Blood
- And shall we then abide in sin** (v 5, ...The living portraiture of God)
PW Vol 5, p 328 (H&SP 1749) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- And will he not his purchase take** / Who died to make us all his own?
PW Vol 3, p 299-300 (HoLS 1745) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- Arise, my soul, arise**
(v 2, He ever lives above, For me to intercede) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
4.3 Intercession
4.4 Blood
(vv 3 and 4, Five bleeding wounds he bears) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
(v 5, My God is reconciled) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
(v 4, His Spirit answers to the blood) 5.2 The Holy Spirit
H&P 217 (H&SP 1742)
- Arise, thou jealous God, arise** (v 6, ... And spread the victory of thy cross)
PW Volume 8, p 404 (SH 1762) 3. The Cross as Victory
- Attacked by Satan's fell deceit** (Toplady) (... Descry the deep-laid hook)
Toplady, *Petitionary Hymns XXXVIII* (6) 3. The Cross as Ransom
- Author of faith, to thee I cry,** /To thee, who wouldst not have me die
PW Vol 4, p 224 (H&SP 1749) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith - Hebrews 12:2
- Baptized into one only name** (And the whole Deity resides)
PW Volume 7, p 277 (HT 1767) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Being of beings, God of love** (v 2, ...Our sacrifice receive)
H&P 690 (H&SP 1739) 4.2 Sacrifice
- Behold the Servant of the Lord**
H&P 788 (first published 1745; H&SP 1749). 1.4 What are the Sources?
And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord - Lk 1:38
- Bridegroom of his Church, and Head** (v 2, Different from the Father then)
PW Volume 7, p 211 (HT 1767) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- But O! No other Sacrifice** / The Father's justice could appease (Toplady)
Toplady, *Poems*, Appx V, "Judgement" 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Captain, God of our salvation**
PW Volume 6 p 161 (Hymns on the Expected Invasion, 1759) 1.4 What are the Sources?
- Christ himself the precept gives**
PW Volume 11, no. 1737 (SH 1762) 1.4 What are the Sources?

- Christ the Lord is risen today** (v 4, Soar we now where Christ hath led)
H&P 193(4) (*H&SP* 1739) 2.3 Christ As Representative
 6. Christian Perfection
- Come down, all-glorious Lord, come down** (v 3, Mercy I keep for all mankind)
PW Vol 5, pp 93-95 (*H&SP* 1742) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Come, happy souls, approach your God** (Watts) (v 2, So strange, so boundless)
 Watts, Volume II, Hymn CIII 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire**, Come, and in me delight to rest
 (v 3, Plunged in the Godhead's ...) 6. Christian Perfection
 7.5 Enduring Achievement
H&P 282 (*H&SP* 1739)
- Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenning fire!** Come, and my hallowed heart inspire
PW Volume 1 pp 240-242 (*H&SP* 1739) 6. Christian Perfection
- Come, O thou all-victorious Lord**, / Thy power to us make known
H&P 418 (*H&SP* 1749) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- Come, O thou Traveller unknown** ("Wrestling Jacob")
 1.4 What are the Sources?
And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day
- Gen 32:24.
 (v 7, thy nature and thy name is love) 7.3 Wesley and Luther
H&P 434 (*H&SP* 1742)
- Come on, my partners in distress**
MHB 487 (*H&SP* 1749) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-
 singing in Methodism
 (v 6, The Father shining on his throne) 7.5 Enduring achievement
- Come, sinners, to the gospel feast** (v 5, See him set forth before your eyes)
H&P 460(5) (*RH* 1747) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
- Come, thou everlasting Spirit**, /Bring to every thankful mind
 5.2 The Holy Spirit
 (v 4 (old) Let us feel thine inward groaning) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
 (v 3, Let us feel thy power applying) 4.4 Blood
H&P 298 (*HoLS* 1745)
- Come, to the Supper come** (v 2, In this authentic sign / Behold the stamp divine)
PW Come, Holy Ghost, set to thy seal
- Did Jesus for the world atone?**
PW Vol 11 p 325 (*SH* 1762) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Enlarge my heart to all mankind**, The purchase of thy dying groan
PW Vol 3, p 29 (*HoGEL* 1741) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Entered the holy place above** / Covered with meritorious scars
MHB 232, *PW* Vol 13, p 140 (*SH* 1762) 4. The Priesthood of Christ
 4.3 Intercession
He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us - Heb
9:12
- Ere God had built the mountains** (Cowper)
Olney Hymns 52 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

- Expand thy wings, celestial dove** (verse 5, With all who for redemption groan)
PW Volume 9, p 2 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- Father, he cries, forgive their sins** (Watts)
Watts, Hymns, 2/2 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- Father, let the sinner go** (v 2, Can thy justice aught reply To our prevailing plea?)
PW Volume 3, pp 306-7 (HoLS 1745). 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- Father of everlasting grace** (v 2, Send us the Spirit of thy Son)
H&P 300 (HPT 1746) 6. Christian Perfection
- Father of Jesus Christ - my Lord** (v 5, Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees)
H&P 693 (H&SP 1742) 6. Christian Perfection
- Father of everlasting grace** (v 2, Send us the Spirit of thy Son)
H&P 300 (HPT 1746) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- Father, see this living clod** (v 4, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, In council join again)
PW Volume 9, pp 2, 3, 18 and 64 (SH 1762) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- Father, thy beloved Son** (v 6, Father thy heavenly voice I own)
PW 10 p 26 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- Father, thy heavenly voice I own**, /Propitious through thy favourite Son
PW Vol 10, no.26 (SH 1762, on Matthew 3:17) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Father, we give thee all the praise**
PW Vol 13, p 71 (SH 1762) 6. Christian Perfection
- Father, whose everlasting love/ Thy only Son for sinners gave**
 1.1 Broad approach of thesis
 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
 5.1 Christ Died For All
 3. The Cross as Ransom
 Appx C Authorship
 (v 2, the general Saviour of mankind)
H&P 520 (HoGEL 1741)
Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world - St John 1:29
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life - St John 3:16-17
- Firmly I believe and truly** (J H Newman)
Hymns and Songs (1969), 17 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- For every man he tasted death**, /He suffered once for all
H&SP 1740 5.1 Christ Died For All
That he [Jesus] by the grace of God should taste death for every man - Hebrews 2:9
- For her, whom her apostate sons despise** ("An Epistle to the Rev Mr John Wesley")
PW Volume 6, p 60. 1.4 What are the Sources?
- For what you have done** /His blood must atone
PW Volume 4, p 371 (H&SP 1749) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

From thy supreme tribunal, Lord (Toplady)

Toplady: *Petitionary Hymns* XXXVII

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

From whence this fear and unbelief (Toplady)

Toplady: *Occasional Hymns* XVI.

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

Gifts extraordinary bestowed (v 2, Still the Holy Ghost descends)

PW Vol 12, p 357-358 (*SH* 1762).

6. Christian Perfection

Give me the faith which can remove (v 4, And lead them to thy open side)

H&P 767 (*H&SP* 1749)

4.4 Blood

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place - St Matthew 17:20

Glorious Saviour of my soul (v 5, Yet thy wrath I cannot fear)

PW Volume 3, p 10 (*HoGEL* 1741)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

Revelation 6:16, ...and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb

Glory be to God on high (v 2, Emptied of his majesty)

H&P 101 (*NH* 1744)

7.4 Modern Theology

God did the testament injoin, Which God confirmed with his own blood

PW Volume 7, p 240 (*HT* 1767)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

God vouchsafes to dwell/ With all the chosen seed

(v 2, God hath quenched the wrath of God)

PW Vol 12, p 216 (*SH* 1762)

2.1 Wesley and substitution

7. The Wider Context

God of all consolation

(verse 7, Him eye to eye we there shall see)

1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism

(v 2, Standing now as newly slain)

PW Volume 4, p 281 (*RH* 1747)

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him - Revelation 1:7

God of all power, and truth, and grace (v 4, Give me a new, a perfect heart)

(v 4, Give me a new, a perfect heart)

5.4 Christ our Righteousness

6. Christian Perfection

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you - Ezek 36:26

H&P 726 (*H&SP* 1742)

Appendix A.2

God of grace, vouchsafe to me / That Spirit of holiness

PW Volume 12, p 298 (*SH* 1762)

6. Christian Perfection

God of love, whose truth and grace (Toplady)

(All my sins imputed were/ To my dear, incarnate God)

Toplady: *Petitionary Hymns* V.

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

God of my salvation, hear (verse 5, Saviour, from thy wounded side)

H&P 729 (*H&SP* 1742)

4.4 Blood

O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee - Psalm 88:1 (BCP)

God of unexampled grace (v 2, Endless scenes of wonder rise)

1.1 Broad approach of thesis

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

(v 3, Crucified before our eyes)

H&P 166 (*HoLS* 1745)

7.4 Modern Theology

God over all, for ever blessed, /A curse and sin for sinners made

PW Volume 13 no. 3156 (SH 1762)

3. The Cross as Ransom

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin - 2 Cor 5:21

God was in Christ, the eternal Sire, Revealed in the eternal Son

PW Volume 7, p 215 (HT 1767)

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

(v 1, Jehovah did on earth expire)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself - 2 Corinthians 5:19

Hail, Father, Son and Spirit, great (v 3, ...Our souls resemble thee)

PW Vol 7, p 266 (HT 1768)

7.5 Enduring Achievement

Hail, Jesus, hail, our great High-Priest (v 2, The blood of goats and bullocks)

PW Vol 4, p 157 (first published 1746)

6. Christian Perfection

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?- Hebrews 9:13-14

Happy the man who Jesus knew (v 4, I set my God a time no more)

PW, Vol 9, p 396 (SH 1762 on Isaiah 28:16)

6. Christian Perfection

Happy the souls that followed thee

2.3 Christ As Representative

(v 6, We cast our sins into that fire)

(v 7, In this tremendous mystery)

PW Vol 3, p 222 (HoLS 1745)

Happy we, who humbly prove (v 2, Boldly we approach the throne)

PW Vol 13, p 143

7.5 Enduring Achievement

He dies, as now for us he dies! (v 2, He lives for us to intercede),

PW Vol 3, p 221 (HoLS 1745)

4.3 Intercession

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

He purchased our pardon /Who died in our stead

PW Volume 13, p 220 (SH 1762)

3. The Cross as Ransom

He waits, that we from sin may turn (v 4, Yet till thy time is fully come)

PW, Vol 9, p 396 (SH 1762 on Isaiah 30:18)

6. Christian Perfection

He will not speak a greater word:.. "The chief of sinners, I!"

UPCW Vol 2, p 469

6. Christian Perfection

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief - 1 Timothy 1:15

Hear, holy, holy, holy Lord

PW Vol 1 pp 311-315

(v 2, We bless the saving name)

5.1 Christ Died For All

(v 10, Whom his eternal mind foreknew)

5.1 Christ Died For All

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son - Romans 8:29

(v 19, Ho! every one that thirsteth, come!)

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters - Isaiah 55:1

(v 36, Thee every tongue shall then confess)

5.1 Christ Died For All

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord - Phil 2:10-11

PW Vol 1 p 310

- Heathens hear what Jews reject**
 PW Vol 12, p 348 (*SH* 1762 on Acts 18:8) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Holy Ghost, remove the grief** (v 2, Faith's appropriating power)
 PW Vol 13, p 62 (*SH* 1762) 5.2 The Holy Spirit
- Holy, and just, and gracious God** (v 12, Ye potsherd of the earth, presume)
 PW Vol 3, pp 34-38 (*HoGEL* 1741) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- How blest is life if lived for thee** (Anon) (v 2, To know I am thy ransomed child)
H&P 421 3. The Cross as Ransom
- How can a sinner know / His sins on earth forgiven?**
 (v 2, We who in Christ believe) 5.2 The Holy Spirit
H&P 728 (*H&SP* 1749) 4.4 Blood
That ye may know that ye have eternal life - 1 John 5:13
- How condescending and how kind** (Watts) (v 2, When justice by our sins provoked)
 Watts, Volume III, Hymn IV. 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- How could God for sinners die? How could man the pardon buy?**
 PW Volume 7, p 241 (*HT* 1767) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- How happy are they** (verse 6, I rode on the sky/ (Freely justified I!))
 PW Volume 4, p 409 (*H&SP* 1749) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- How long, how often shall I pray / Take all iniquity away**
 PW Vol 8, p 431 6. Christian Perfection
Take away all iniquity, and give good - Hosea 4:2
- How shall a slave released** (v 8, The Spirit of my God / Hath certified him mine)
 PW Vol 5, p 365 (*H&SP* 1749) 5.2 The Holy Spirit
- How should I know unless from thee, / That thou art still a God unknown?**
 PW Vol 9, p 420, no. 1163 (*SH* 1762) 7.3 Wesley and Luther
Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour - Isaiah 45:15
- I wait to feel thy blood applied, / Thy blood applied shall make me whole**
 PW Vol 8, p 225 (*SH* 1762) 4.4 Blood
- I want the Spir't of power within**
H&P 291 (*H&SP* 1740) 1.4 What are the Sources?
For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind - 2 Timothy 1:7
- I'll praise my Maker while I've breath** (Watts)
H&P 439 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- In this expressive bread I see** (verse 6, Seized by the rage of sinful men)
 PW Volume 3, p 216 (*HoLS* 1745) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- In that suffering Son of man**
UPCW, Vol II, on Luke 9:22-23 2.3 Christ As Representative

- In weariness and pain** (...O were I offered up /upon thy sacrifice!)
 UPCW, Vol II, p 87 2.3 Christ As Representative
- Israel, in ancient days** (Cowper) (v 2, The paschal sacrifice...an angry God)
Olney Hymns, 132 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- Jesu, suffering Deity**
 PW Volume 3 p 223 (*HoLS* 1745) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Jesu, the strength of all that turn** (v 5, Lo! here we are, thy truth to prove)
 PW Vol 5 p 311 (*H&SP* 1749). 6. Christian Perfection
- Jesu, thou all-redeeming Lord**
 (v 15, Vilest of all the apostate race) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
 (v 8, Thy side an open fountain is) 4.4 Blood
 PW Vol 5, p 121-122 (*H&SP* 1749)
Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters - Isaiah 55:1
- Jesus, thou tried Foundation Stone** (Toplady)
 Toplady, *Hymns of Thanksgiving*, VI 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- Jesu, thy legacy I take**
 (v 3, I thirst to drink my master's cup) 2.3 Christ as Representative
 PW Vol 4, p 322-323 (*H&SP* 1749) 7.4 Modern Theology
Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? - Mark 10:38
- Jesu, thy wandering sheep behold** (v 10, To thee, for all men lifted up)
 PW, Vol 2, p 344 (*H&SP* 1742) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Jesus Christ, the Lord's Anointed** (Newton)(v 6, When a guilty sinner sees him)
Olney Hymns 78 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
- Jesus hath died that I might live** (v 3, My soul breaks out in strong desire)
 3. The Cross as Victory
 1.3 Experience and Hymn-
 singing in Methodism
 7.4 Modern Theology
H&P 733 (*H&SP* 1742)
And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them - 2 Cor 5:15
- Jesus, in thine all-saving name** (v 3, On both thy Natures we rely)
 PW Volume 5, p 322 (*H&SP* 1749). 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Jesus is my great High-priest**, Who doth in heaven appear
 PW Vol 9, p 36 (*SH* 1762, on Exodus 4:10) 4.3 Intercession
Seeing then that we have a great high priest - Hebrews 4:14
- Jesus, Jehovah, God**, /Thou art gone up on high,
 PW Volume 7, p 239 (*HT* 1767) 3. The Cross as Victory
Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men... - Psalm 68:18 (BCP); Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us (Romans 8:37); And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it - Colossians 2:15
- Jesus my Hope, my Help, my Power** (v 7, ... The HORRIBLE DECREE)
 PW Vol 3, p 59 (*HoGEL* 1741) 5.1 Christ Died For All
 4.4 Blood

Jesus, Redeemer, Saviour, Lord (v 13, Thou canst o'ercome this heart of mine)
PW Volume 1, p 269-271 (*H&SP* 1740) 3. The Cross as Victory

Jesus that Ladder is
PW Volume 9, on Gen 28:12-13 (first pubd 1762) 1.4 What are the Sources?
And [Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth - Gen 28:12

Jesus, the all-restoring Word (v 4, Fill me with all the life of love)
PW Vol 1 p 225 (*H&SP* 1740) 6. Christian Perfection
1.2 What is Atonement?

Jesus the conqueror reigns
H&P 262 (*H&SP* 1749) 3. The Cross as Victory

Jesus, the First and Last, / On thee my soul is cast
H&P 735 (*SH* 1762) 6. Christian Perfection
I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last - Revelation 1:11

Jesus, the gift divine I ask (v 4, Thy mind throughout my life be shown)
H&P 318 (*SH* 1762) 7.5 Enduring Achievement

Jesus, thou art the Lord Most-High, The praying Spirit thou art,
PW Volume 13, p 93 (*SH* 1762 on 1 Thess. 5:18) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

Jesus, thou tried Foundation Stone... Made mine by imputation (Toplady)
Toplady, *Hymns of Thanksgiving* VI 6. Christian Perfection

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness (Zinzendorf, tr. J Wesley)
H&P 225 (*H&SP* 1740) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness

Jesus, thy far-extended fame (v 5, Wouldst thou the body's heath restore)
H&P 148 (*H&SP* 1749) 7.1 Church Fathers

Jesus, thy legacy I take (v 3, I thirst to drink my Master's cup)
PW Vol 5, pp 152-3 7.4 Modern theology

Jesus we ask thy promised aid
(v 7, Victorious, with thy cross in view) 2.3 Christ As Representative
(v , O let thy grief dry up her tears) 7.4 Modern Theology
PW Volume 7, p 65 (*FH* 1767)

Jesus, we thus obey / Thy last and kindest word
H&P 614 (*HoLS* 1745) 6. Christian Perfection

Jesus, who lived above the sky (Ann Gilbert) (v 6, He knew how wicked...)
United Methodist School Hymnal 2.1 Wesley and Substitution

Jesus, with thy Father come, / And bring our inward Guide
PW Vol 12 no. 2190 (*SH* 1762 on John 17:23) 5.1 Christ Died For All

Join all the glorious names (Watts) (v 4, His powerful blood did once atone)
H&P 78 2.1 Wesley and Substitution

Lamb of God, whose bleeding [now "dying"] **love**/ We thus recall to mind
(old v 3, Let thy blood, by faith applied) 6. Christian Perfection
H&P 550 (*HoLS* 1745) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness

Let earth and heaven combine...Our God contracted to a span

7.3 Wesley and Luther

7.5 Enduring Achievement

1.2 What is Atonement?

(v 4, He deigns in flesh to appear)

H&P 109 (NH 1744)

Let me alone another year (v 3, And all things count but dung and loss)

PW Volume 7, p 396 (*Preparation for Death* 1772)

2.3 Christ As Representative

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ - Philippians 3:8

Let me dwell on Golgotha, Weep and love my life away! (Newton)

Olney Hymns Vol II, Hymn 56

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

Let the world their virtue boast (v 9, Jesus, thou for me hast died)

PW Volume 2, p 318 (*H&SP* 1742)

2.3 Christ As Representative

Let us with our Lord retreat, /To the holy mount repair

UPCW Vol 2, p 195.

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him - Luke 22:39

Lift up your eyes of faith (v 2, Crucified before our eyes /... the dying GOD)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

PW Vol 3, p 227 (*HoLS* 1745)

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

Lift up your eyes to the heavenly seats (Watts)

(v 2, 'Twas well, my soul)

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

Watts, Volume II, Hymn XXXVII.

Lo, he comes with clouds descending (v 3, The dear tokens of his passion)

H&P 241 (*HIAM* 1758)

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

7.5 Enduring Achievement

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him - Revelation 1:7

Long have I seemed to serve thee, Lord

PW Vol 1 p 233

5.4 Christ our Righteousness

Look back, my soul, and take a view /Of GOD expiring on the Tree (Toplady)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

Hymn I from *An Appendix to the Hymns of A M Toplady*

Look up my soul; on yonder tree (Cennick) (v 4, ... pacified an angry God!)

John Cennick, *Sacred Hymns*, XCII

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

Lord, and is thine anger gone? And art thou pacified?

PW Volume 2, p 123 (*H&SP* 1742)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

Lord, I believe thy work of grace! (v 15, The promised land, from Pisgah's top)

PW Volume 2, p 364 (*H&SP* 1742)

3. The Cross as Victory

Lord, unto me the knowledge grant, / Which, incompatible with sin

PW Vol 13, p 203 (*SH* 1762)

Appendix A.5

Love divine, all loves excelling

(old v 2, Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit)

6. Christian Perfection

H&P 267 (*RH* 1747)

My God! I know, I feel thee mine

H&P 740 (H&SP 1740)

6. Christian Perfection

Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee - Isaiah 8:2

My God, my God, to thee I cry (v 4, Tell me again my peace is made)

PW Volume 1, p 326 (H&SP 1740)

3. The Cross as Ransom

My heart is full of Christ, and longs (v 4, Come, and maintain thy... cause)

3. The Cross as Victory

My heart is inditing of a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made unto the King - Psalm 45 (BCP)

H&P 799 (A Collection of Psalms and Hymns, 1743)

Mystery of amazing grace! Heaven's offended majesty

PW Volume 13, p 49 (SH 1762)

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God - 2 Cor 5:19

Nature with open volume stands (Watts)

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

(v 3, Here his whole name appears complete)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross? H&P

174

No, Saviour, no; thy wounds are fresh (Toplady)

Petitionary Hymns XXXVII (9)

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

Nothing unclean can come from heaven; /We all were pure as made by God

PW Vol 12, p 246 (SH 1762 on Acts 10:15)

5.1 Christ Died For All

And the voice spake again unto him the second time, What God hath cleansed, call thou not common - Acts 10:15

Now, e'en now, we all plunge in, /And drink the purple wave

PW Vol 3, p 235 (HoLS 1745)

4.4 Blood

O all-redeeming Lord (V 8, Thou didst not mock our race /With insufficient grace)

PW Vol 3, pp 30-31 (HoGEL 1741)

5.1 Christ Died For All

O filial Deity, Accept my new-born cry!

(v 7...Still thou stand'st before the throne)

PW Vol 1, pp 97-99 (H&SP 1739)

5.1 Christ Died For All

4.3 Intercession

O for a heart to praise my God, ...A heart that always feels thy blood

H&P 536(1) (H&SP 1742)

4.4 Blood

7.5 Enduring Achievement

O for a thousand tongues to sing (v 4, His blood can make the foulest clean)

4.4 Blood

H&P 744 (H&SP 1740)

5.1 Christ Died For All

O God, was ever heart like mine!

(v 7,...But thou canst perfect me in love)

(v 9, If thou hast power and will to save)

PW Vol 5, p 310 (H&SP 1749)

6. Christian Perfection

O Jesus, let me bless thy name (v 5, Take the dear purchase of thy blood)

PW Volume 4, p 340 (H&SP 1742)

3. The Cross as Ransom

4.4 Blood

7.5 Enduring Achievement

(v 3, And purge my foul conscience) 4.4 Blood
(v 4, ...And make me, O Lord, in the world as thou art)
PW Vol 4 p 365 (H&SP 1749) 6. Christian Perfection
How much more shall the blood of Christ...purge your conscience from dead works -
Heb 9:14
For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you - St John 13:15

O take away the stone (v 5, Armed with this fiery dart)
PW Vol 3 p 46 (HoGEL 1741) 5.1 Christ Died For All

O the grace on man bestowed!
(v 3, Our High-priest in heaven he lives) 2.3 Christ our Representative
UPCW Vol 3, p 193
For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities
- Hebrews 4:15

O thou who at thy creature's bar (verse 3, Slain for a sinful world, and me)
1749 (see Appendix A.3) Appendix A.3

O thou who didst thy glory leave (Toplady) (v 4, Ye saints, the Man of Sorrows...)
Toplady, Hymn XIV **2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?**

O Thou whom once they flocked to hear (v 4, Helpless howe'er my spirit lies)
H&P 150 (H&SP 1749) 1.5 Interpreting the sources
 Based on John 5:1-15 7.1 Church Fathers

O thou, whose offering on the tree (v 2, The blood of goats and bullocks slain)
PW Vol 3, p 307 (HoLS 1745) 4.2 Sacrifice
For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away
sins - Hebrews 10:4

- O what shall I do, my Saviour to praise** 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
(v 3, Their daily delight shall be in thy name) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
H&P 569 (H&SP 1742)
- Oft I in my heart have said**
PW Vol 2, p 240 (H&SP 1742) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- On both thy Natures we rely, Neither can save alone**
PW Volume 5, p 323 (H&SP 1749) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Open, Lord, my inward ear** (v 4, Show me, as my soul can bear)
H&P 540 (H&SP 1742) 6. Christian Perfection
- Open my eyes of faith to see / Thy hands and feet transfixed and torn**
PW Vol 12, p 312 (SH 1762) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
- Our heavenly Master is but One, /And Jesus is his name**
PW Volume 7, p 231 (HT 1767) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Our Lord is risen from the dead** (v 4, Who is this King of Glory, who?)
H&P 206 (A Collection of Psalms and Hymns, 1743) 3. The Cross as Victory
Who is the King of glory - Psalm 24:8 (BCP)
- Plunge me in the purple tide /Of thy atoning blood**
PW Vol 2, p 240 (H&SP 1742) 4.4 Blood
- Redeemer, whither should I flee** (Toplady) (v 3, Close to my Saviour's bloody tree)
Toplady, Petitionary Hymns XXXI 2.3 Christ As Representative
- Rock of Ages, cleft for me** (Toplady) (v 3, Nothing in my hand I bring)
H&P 273 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- Saviour from sin, I wait to prove / That Jesus is thy healing name**
(orig. v 4, "Didst thou not in the flesh appear") 1.4 What are the Sources?
(v 2, Answer that gracious end in me) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
6. Christian Perfection
God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh - Romans 8:3
Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged - Isaiah 6:7, KJV
When he had by himself purged our sins - Hebrews 1:3, KJV
H&P 747 (H&SP 1742)
- Saviour, how long shall men blaspheme, ... their dying GOD?** (Toplady)
Toplady, Petitionary Hymns XXIII 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Saviour of all, what hast thou done** (v 2, Thou hast for me a ransom paid)
PW Vol 5, p 148 (H&SP 1749) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- Saviour, who ask to reign with thee**
PW Volume 11, p 36, no.997 (SH 1762) 2.3 Christ As Representative
Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? - Mark 10:38
- Saviour, the world's and mine** (v 1, Thou my pain, my curse hath took)
(v 2, 'Tis done! My God hath died!) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
PW Volume 1, p 149 (H&SP 1739)

- See where before the throne he stands**
 PW Vol 7, p 276 (*SH* 1762) 4.3 Intercession
We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens - Hebrews 8:1
- See where our great High Priest** (v 3, The promptings of our Head)
H&P 622 (*HoLS* 1745) 2.3 Christ As Representative
We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens - Hebrews 8:1
- See where the quickening cause of all** (v 6, And will he not his purchase take)
 PW Volume 3, p 299 (*HoLS* 1745) 3. The Cross as Ransom
- Shepherd divine, at whose command** (v 6, Lulled in imaginary peace)
 PW Vol 5, p 245-246 (*H&SP* 1749) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- Shepherd divine, our wants relieve** (v 3, To wrestle till we see thy face)
H&P 558 (*H&SP* 1749) 7.3 Wesley and Luther
As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep - Ezekiel 34:12
- Sing to the Lord, ye heavenly hosts** (Watts) (v 2, How dreadful was the hour)
 Watts, Volume II, Hymn LXII 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- Sinners turn; why will ye die?** (v 7, ...Transcripts of the Trinity)
 PW Vol 3, p 84 (*HoGEL* 1741) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- Sorrows and agonies and death, Thou didst endure for me** (Toplady)
 Toplady, *Occasional Hymns* XXVI (6) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Spirit of faith, come down ...Hath surely died for me.**
 1.4 What are the Sources?
But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit - 1 Cor 2:10
 5.1 Christ Died For All
 And cry with joy unspeakable: 'Thou art my Lord..!' 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
...Thou art my Lord, my God! - John 20:26-29
 (old v 3, I know my Saviour lives) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
H&P 325 (*HPT* 1746)
- Sprinkle thy blood upon my heart, /And melt it by thy dying love**
 PW Vol 4, p 442 (*H&SP* 1749) 4.4 Blood
- Supreme, incarnate Deity, /Display thy sovereign power in me**
 PW, Vol 10, no.18 on Matthew 3:9 (*SH* 1762) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- That blood we felt through faith applied** 4.4 Blood
 PW Vol 4, p 32 (*Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution*, 1744)
- The day of Christ, the day of God**
 PW Volume 7, p 243 (*HT* 1767) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
[God] was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him - Colossians 1:19
- The children every one partake / The chastisement for all designed**
 PW Vol 13, p 157, no.3321 (*SH* 1762) 6. Christian Perfection
- The eternal God from heaven came down**
 (NH 1744) 7.5 Enduring Achievement

- The King of saints, with glory crowned**
 UPCW, Vol II, p 87 (on Luke 3:21) 2.3 Christ As Representative
- The marks of thy expiring love / In glory, Lord, thou dost retain**
 UPCW Vol 2, p 211 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
- The Mediator stands between / An angry God and guilty race**
 PW Volume 9 p 67 (SH 1762). 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel - Hebrews 12:24
- The Partner of our flesh and blood, / As man, inferior is to God**
 PW Vol 7, p 232 (HT 1767) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
 7.4 Modern Theology
- The reign of sin and death is o'er... 'Tis swallowed up in victory**
 PW Volume 12, p 99 (SH 1762) 3. The Cross as Victory
- The sacred Three conspire / In love to fallen man**
 PW 7, p 338 7. The Wider Context
- Thee, great, tremendous Deity (v 5, The whole ... Trinity Inhabiting my heart)**
 PW Vol 7, pp 314-315 (HT 1767) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
- Thee, Jesu, thee, the sinner's friend (v 9, ...He wills that all the fallen race)**
 PW Vol 2, p 301 (H&SP 1742) 5.1 Christ Died For All
God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth - 1 Timothy 2:3b-4
- Thee, Jesus, we confess (v 2, Who wilfully refuse The Life, the Truth, the Way)**
 PW Vol 12, pp 6-7 (SH 1762, on John 14:5) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Then let us go, and take, and eat (Echoing back his deepest groan)**
 PW Vol 3, p 217 (HoLS 1745) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
- There is a fountain filled with blood (William Cowper)**
 Olney Hymns 4.4 Blood
- There is a green hill far away (Mrs C F Alexander) (v 3, He died to make us good)**
 H&P 178 6. Christian Perfection
- Thou God unsearchable, unknown, / Who still concealst thyself from me**
 PW Vol 9, p 420, no. 1161 (SH 1762) 7.3 Wesley and Luther
Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour - Isaiah 45:15
- Thou great mysterious God unknown**
 MHB 376 (PW Vol 4 pp 235-237: H&SP 1749) 7.3 Wesley and Luther
Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour - Isaiah 45:15
- Thou hidden source of calm repose (v 2, Thy mighty name salvation is)**
 H&P 275 (H&SP 1749) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness
- Thou Man of affliction and woe...the heart of a crucified God**
 PW Volume 13, p 105 (SH 1762) 2.2 Did God die on the cross?
- Thou Man of griefs, remember me (v 2, Thy feeble flesh abhorred to bear / The wrath of an almighty God)**
 PW Volume 1, p 149 (H&SP 1739). 2.1 Wesley and Substitution

- Thou Shepherd of Israel, and mine** (v 2, ...And hang on a crucified God)
H&P 750 (SH 1762) 2.3 Christ As Representative
 7.4 Modern Theology
- Through the perfect righteousness** /Of God the Saviour here
PW Volume 7 p 215, (HT 1767). 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- Though all the precious promises** / I find fulfilled in Jesu's love
PW Vol 9, p 238 (SH 1762) 6. Christian Perfection
- Thus saith the Ruler of the Skies,** *Awake my dreadful sword* (Watts)
 Watts, Volume II, Hymn LXXXIII. 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
- Thy ceaseless, unexhausted love** (verse 4, Its streams the whole creation reach)
H&P 48 (SH 1762) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-singing in Methodism
- Thy soul, for sin an offering made,** /Hath cleansed this guilty soul of mine
PW Volume 5, p 148 (H&SP 1749) 3. The Cross as Ransom
But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God - Hebrews 10:12
- 'Tis finished! The Messiah dies**
 (v 2 'Tis finished! ...Justice divine is satisfied) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
 (v 5, The reign of sin and death is o'er)
 (v 10, Death, hell, and sin are now subdued) 3. The Cross as Victory
 (v 2, 'Tis finished! all the debt is paid) 7. The Wider Context
 5.2 The Holy Spirit
PW Vol 12, p 99 (SH 1762) Appendix A .1
Jesus...said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost - St John 19:30
- 'Tis not a sudden stroke of grace** / Destroys at once the cursed race
PW Vol 9, no.305 (SH 1762, on Deuteronomy 7:22) 6. Christian Perfection
- To the fountain of thy blood** /With trembling haste I fly
PW Vol 5, p 204 (H&SP 1749) 4.4 Blood
- Tremendous love to lost mankind!** /Could none but Christ the Ransom find?
PW Volume 3, p 247 (HoLS 1745) 3. The Cross as Ransom
- Very man, and very God,** Thou hast bought us with thy blood
PW Volume 7 p 241 (HT 1767) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
- Upon the cross I see him bleed** (Newton)
Olnay Hymns 134(4) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
- Us thou dost in Christ receive...** Their *Substitute* to be (Toplady)
 Toplady, *Hymns of Thanksgiving V* 6. Christian Perfection
- Victim divine, thy grace we claim** (v 2, Thy blood is still our ransom found)
 (orig v 4, He still respects thy sacrifice) 3. The Cross as Ransom
H&P 629 (HoLS 1745) 4. The Priesthood of Christ
 4.2 Sacrifice
- Victim of an angry God,** / Devoted to the skies
 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
UPCW Vol 2, p 275 3. The Cross as Victory
And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull - John 19:17

We have not an High-priest above (v 3, ...Abandoned by his angry God)
 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
 4.The Priesthood of Christ
For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin - Heb 4:15 KJV
 PW Vol 13 pp 126-127 (SH 1762)

We have not, Lord, thy gifts improved
 PW Vol 4, p 422 (H&SP 1749) 5.1 Christ Died For All

Well, the Redeemer's gone /To appear before our God (Watts)
 Watts, *Hymns*, 2/36. 2.1 Wesley and Substitution

What is the pleasure of my Lord? What is his will concerning me?
 PW Vol 13, p 97, No. 3220 (SH 1762) 6. Christian Perfection

What! Never speak one evil word ... Saviour, I long to testify
 PW Vol 9, p 321 (SH 1762) 6. Christian Perfection

What shall I do my God to love, /My loving God to praise?
 (v 3, So wide it never passed by one) 5.1 Christ Died For All
 (The length, and breadth, and height to prove) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
 H&P 46 (H&SP 1742)
That ye...may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height - Ephesians 3:17-18

What shall I do my God to love, /My Saviour, and the world's, to praise?
 (v 2, Whose every sin was counted mine) 2.3 Christ As Representative
 5.1 Christ Died For All
 (v 2,...The heights and depths of love divine) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
 H&P 47 (H&SP 1742)
That ye...may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height - Ephesians 3:17-18

When I survey the wondrous cross (Watts)
 H&P 180 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
 6. Christian Perfection

When I use the proffered power, / And to the Fountain fly
 PW Vol 10, no.1312 on Jeremiah 13:27 (SH 1762) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness

When Jesus from the dead he raised, /The Father glorified the Son
 UPCW Vol 2, p 261 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

When Jesus languished on the tree 2.3 Christ As Representative
 (v 2, Partake his bitterest pangs and woes, Together crucified)
 UPCW Vol 3, p 83

When the first parents of our race (Watts) (v 2, Here thy revenging justice stands)
 Watts, Volume II, Hymn LLXXVII 2.1 Wesley and Substitution

Where shall my wondering soul begin (v 5, His open side shall take you in)
 H&P 706 (H&SP 1739) 4.4 Blood

Wherewith, O God, shall I draw near
 (verse 8, Jesus, the Lamb of God hath bled, and Can these avert the wrath of God)
 (verse 3, Can these avert the wrath of God) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-
 PW Volume 7, p 276 (SH 1762) singing in Methodism
Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith - Heb 10:22

- Who can worthily commend /Thy love unsearchable!**
PW Volume 13, p 220 (*SH* 1762) 3. The Cross as Ransom
- Who Jesus revere ...His astonishing grace /To the reprobate race**
PW, Vol 12, no.2698 (*SH* 1762) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
- Who on the Lord Most High (v 8, No one of Adam's race /Shall then unsaved...)**
PW Vol 8 p 326 (Hymn IX for the National Fast, 1782) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Who will reject thy richest grace /Their own damnation seal**
PW Vol 10, p 251 (*SH* 1762, on Matthew 11:24) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Who would not in thy footsteps tread...And sympathize with God!**
The Arminian Magazine, Volume 4, p 332 2.3 Christ As Representative
- With glorious clouds encompassed round** 1.4 What are the Sources?
 (v 5, The heights and depths of grace) 7.5 Enduring Achievement
H&P 184 (*HF* 1767)
- Would Jesus have the sinner die?...What means that strange expiring cry?**
H&P 185 (*HoGEL* 1741) 4.3 Intercession
- Would the Saviour of mankind / Without his people die?**
 Appendix A.4
- Ye that pass by, behold the Man, / The Man of griefs condemned for you!**
 Appendix A.6
- Yes, our sins have done the deed**
PW Vol 3, p 321 (*HoLS* 1745) 5.1 Christ Died For All
- Yet him the Almighty Father's will /With bruising chastisements pursued**
PW Volume 1 p 80 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed - Isaiah 53:5

APPENDIX F

Main Scripture References in Hymns

Notes:

1. Entries show:

- the scripture reference in **bold**, followed by the text, if significant. Example:
Isaiah 45:15 *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour*
References are always to the KJV unless the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) is specified.
- the first line of the hymn, followed by (a) the first line of the verse quoted, if this is not itself the first line of the hymn, or (b) any significant later words of the first verse. Examples:
 - (a)
A living principle of grace (v 3, Come then, the true celestial Vine)
 - (b)
Adam descended from above, /Federal Head of all mankind
- the *modern* source, if any (*H&P*, *MHB*) or the *PW/UPCW* reference, followed by the original source and date (e.g. HoLS 174). Example:
 - (c)
H&P 216 (*H&SP* 1739)
 - (d)
PW Volume 9, p 415 (*SH* 1762)
- the chapter and subject under which the hymn is quoted. For reasons of space, this has often been abbreviated. Example:
2.1 Wesley and Substitution
(Shortened from “Wesley and the Doctrine of Substitution”).

2. Some hymns may be referred to under more than one text.

Gen 28:12: *And [Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth*

Jesus that Ladder is

PW Volume 9, on Gen 28:12-13 (*SH* 1762)

1.4 What are the Sources?

Gen 32:24: *And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day -*

Come, O thou Traveller unknown (“Wrestling Jacob”)

1.4 What are the Sources?

(v 7, thy nature and thy name is love)

H&P 434 (*H&SP* 1742)

7.3 Wesley and Luther

Isaiah 8:2 *Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee*

My God! I know, I feel thee mine

H&P 740 (*H&SP* 1740)

6. Christian Perfection

Psalms 45 (BCP) - *My heart is inditing of a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made unto the King*

My heart is full of Christ, and longs (v 4, Come, and maintain thy... cause)

3. The Cross as Victory

H&P 799 (*A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, 1743)

Psalm 24:8 (BCP) -*Who is the King of glory*
Our Lord is risen from the dead (v 4, Who is this King of Glory, who?)
H&P 206 (A Collection of Psalms and Hymns, 1743) 3. The Cross as Victory

Psalm 68:18 (BCP) *Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men*
Jesus, Jehovah, God, /Thou art gone up on high,
PW Volume 7, p 239 (HT 1767) 3. The Cross as Victory

Psalm 88:1 (BCP) *O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee*
God of my salvation, hear (verse 5, Saviour, from thy wounded side)
H&P 729 (H&SP 1742) 4.4 Blood

Song of Solomon 1:7 *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon*
Thou Shepherd of Israel, and mine (v 2, ...And hang on a crucified God)
H&P 750 (SH 1762) 2.3 Christ As Representative
7.4 Modern Theology

Isaiah 6:7 *Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged*
Saviour from sin, I wait to prove / That Jesus is thy healing name
(v 2, Answer that gracious end in me) 6. Christian Perfection
H&P 747 (H&SP 1742)

Isaiah 30:18
He waits, that we from sin may turn (v 4, Yet till thy time is fully come)
PW, Vol 9, p 396 (SH 1762 on Isaiah 30:18) 6. Christian Perfection

Isaiah 45:15 -*Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour*
Thou God unsearchable, unknown, / Who still concealst thyself from me
PW Vol 9, p 420, no. 1161 (SH 1762) 7.3 Wesley and Luther

Isaiah 45:15 -*Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour*
Thou great mysterious God unknown
MHB 376 (PW Vol 4 pp 235-237: H&SP 1749) 7.3 Wesley and Luther

Isaiah 45:15 -*Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour*
An hidden God indeed thou art!
PW Vol 9, p 420, no. 1162 (SH 1762) 7.3 Wesley and Luther

Isaiah 45:15 -*Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour*
How should I know unless from thee, / That thou art still a God unknown?
PW Vol 9, p 420, no. 1163 (SH 1762) 7.3 Wesley and Luther

Isaiah 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed*
Yet him the Almighty Father's will /With bruising chastisements pursued
PW Volume 1 p 80 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

Isaiah 55:1 *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*
Jesu, thou all-redeeming Lord
(v 15, Vilest of all the apostate race) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
(v 8, Thy side an open fountain is) 4.4 Blood
PW Vol 5, p 121-122 (H&SP 1749)

Isaiah 55:1 *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*
Hear, holy, holy, holy Lord
(v 19, Ho! every one that thirsteth, come!) 5.1 Christ Died For All
PW Vol 1 p 311-315

Lamentations 1:12 *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?*

All ye that pass by

(v 2, For what you have done... atone)

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

(v 3, For you and for me / He prayed on the tree)

4.3 Intercession

MHB 188, PW Volume 4, p 371 (H&SP 1749).

Ezekiel 34:12 *As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep*

Shepherd divine, our wants relieve (v 3, To wrestle till we see thy face)

H&P 558 (H&SP 1749)

7.3 Wesley and Luther

Ezekiel 36:26 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*

God of all power, and truth, and grace (v 4, Give me a new, a perfect heart)

(v 4, Give me a new, a perfect heart)

5.4 Christ our Righteousness

6. Christian Perfection

Appendix A.2

H&P 726 (H&SP 1742)

Hosea 4:2 *Take away all iniquity, and give good*

How long, how often shall I pray / Take all iniquity away

PW Vol 8, p 431

6. Christian Perfection

St Matthew 17:20 *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place*

Give me the faith which can remove

4.4 Blood

H&P 767 (H&SP 1749)

St Mark 9:23 *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*

All things are possible to him/ That can in Jesu's name believe

H&P 723 (H&SP 1749)

6. Christian Perfection

St Mark 10:3 *Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?*

Saviour, who ask to reign with thee

PW Volume 11, p 36, no.997 (SH 1762)

2.3 Christ As Representative

St Mark 10:3 *Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?*

Jesu, thy legacy I take

(v 3, I thirst to drink my master's cup)

PW Vol 4, p 322-323 (H&SP 1749)

2.3 Christ as Representative

7.4 Modern Theology

St Luke 1:38 *And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord*

Behold the Servant of the Lord

H&P 788 (first published 1745; H&SP 1749).

1.4 What are the Sources?

St Luke 22:19 *This do in remembrance of me*

Jesus, we thus obey / Thy last and kindest word

H&P 614 (HoLS 1745)

6. Christian Perfection

St Luke 22:39 *Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him*

Let us with our Lord retreat, / To the holy mount repair

UPCW Vol 2, p 195.

5.3 Experiencing the Cross

St John 1:29 *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*

Lamb of God, whose bleeding [now dying] love/ We thus recall to mind

6. Christian Perfection

5.4 Christ our Righteousness

(old v 3, Let thy blood, by faith applied)

H&P 550 (HoLS 1745)

St John 1:29 *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*
Father, whose everlasting love/ Thy only Son for sinners gave

(v 2, the general Saviour of mankind) 5.1 Christ Died For All
H&P 520 (HoGEL 1741) 3. The Cross as Ransom
Appx C Authorship

St John 3:16-17 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life*
Father, whose everlasting love/ Thy only Son for sinners gave

(v 2, the general Saviour of mankind) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
H&P 520 (HoGEL 1741) 5.1 Christ Died For All
Appx C Authorship

St John 3:31 *He that cometh from above is above all*

O thou who camest from above (v 4, ... And make the sacrifice complete)
H&P 745 (SH 1762) 4.2 Sacrifice
7.5 Enduring Achievement

St John 4:10 *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; then thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water*

Jesus, the gift divine I ask (v 4, Thy mind throughout my life be shown)
H&P 318 (SH 1762) 7.5 Enduring Achievement

St John 13:15 *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you - St John 13:15*

O Jesus my Hope/ For me offered up
(v 4, ...And make me, O Lord, in the world as thou art)
PW Vol 4 p 365 (H&SP 1749) 6. Christian Perfection

St John 19:17 *And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull*

Victim of an angry God, / Devoted to the skies
UPCW Vol 2, p 275 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
3. The Cross as Victory

St John 19:30 *Jesus...said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*

'Tis finished! The Messiah dies
(v 2 'Tis finished! ...Justice divine is satisfied) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?
(v 5, The reign of sin and death is o'er)
(v 10, Death, hell, and sin are now subdued) 3. The Cross as Victory
(v 2, 'Tis finished! all the debt is paid) 7. The Wider Context
5.2 The Holy Spirit
PW Vol 12, p 99 (SH 1762) Appendix A .1

St John 20:26-29 *...Thou art my Lord, my God!*

Spirit of faith, come down ...Hath surely died for me 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
(v 2, And cry with joy unspeakable: 'Thou art my Lord, my God!')
H&P 325 (HPT 1746)

St John 20:26-29 *...Thou art my Lord, my God!*

O thou whom fain my soul would love
(v 4, Jesus, thou art my Lord, my God!) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
PW Volume 2, p 166-167 (H&SP 1742)

Acts 10:15 *And the voice spake again unto him the second time, What God hath cleansed, call thou not common*

Nothing unclean can come from heaven; /We all were pure as made by God

PW Vol 12, p 246(SH 1762 on Acts 10:15)

5.1 Christ Died For All

Romans 8:3 *God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*

Saviour from sin, I wait to prove / That Jesus is thy healing name

(orig. v 4, "Didst thou not in the flesh appear") 2.1 Wesley and Substitution

H&P 747 (H&SP 1742)

Romans 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*

Hear, holy, holy, holy Lord

PW Vol 1 pp 311-315

(v 10, Whom his eternal mind foreknew)

5.1 Christ Died For All

Romans 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*

Jesus, Jehovah, God, /Thou art gone up on high

PW Volume 7, p 239 (HT 1767)

3. The Cross as Victory

1 Corinthians 2:10 *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit -*

Spirit of faith, come down, reveal the things of God 5.3 Experiencing the Cross

H&P 325 (HPT 1746)

2 Corinthians 5:15 *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them*

Jesus hath died that I might live

(v 3, My soul breaks out in strong desire)

7.4 Modern Theology

H&P 733 (H&SP 1742)

2 Corinthians 5:19 *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself*

God was in Christ, the eternal Sire, Revealed in the eternal Son

PW Volume 7, p 215 (HT 1767)

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

(v 1, Jehovah did on earth expire)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

2 Corinthians 5:19 *We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*

Mystery of amazing grace! Heaven's offended majesty

PW Volume 13, p 49 (SH 1762)

2.1 Wesley and Substitution

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*

God over all, for ever blessed, /A curse and sin for sinners made

PW Volume 13 no. 3156 (SH 1762)

3. The Cross as Ransom

Galatians 5:24 *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*

Amazing love to mortals showed!

(v 4, The world to me is crucified)

2.3 Christ As Representative

PW Vol 3, p 318 (HoLS 1745)

Ephesians 3:17-18 *That ye...may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*

What shall I do my God to love, /My loving God to praise?

(v 3, So wide it never passed by one)

5.1 Christ Died For All

(The length, and breadth, and height to prove) 7.5 Enduring Achievement

H&P 46 (H&SP 1742)

Ephesians 3:17-18 *That ye...may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*

What shall I do my God to love, / My Saviour, and the world's, to praise?

(v 2, Whose every sin was counted mine) 2.3 Christ As Representative

5.1 Christ Died For All

(v 2,...The heights and depths of love divine) 7.5 Enduring Achievement

H&P 47 (H&SP 1742)

Philippians 2:7 *[Christ Jesus] made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant*

And can it be, that I should gain / An interest in the Saviour's blood

(v 3, Emptied himself of all but love)

7.4 Modern Theology

H&P 216 (H&SP 1739)

7.5 Enduring Achievement

Philippians 2:10-11 *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*

Hear, holy, holy, holy Lord

PW Vol 1 pp 311-315

(v 36, Thee every tongue shall then confess) 5.1 Christ Died For All

PW Vol 1 p 310

Philippians 2:17 *Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all*

O thou who camest from above (v 4, ... And make the sacrifice complete)

H&P 745 (SH 1762)

4.2 Sacrifice

7.5 Enduring Achievement

Philippians 3:8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ*

Let me alone another year (v 3, And all things count but dung and loss)

PW Volume 7, p 396 (Preparation for Death 1772) 2.3 Christ As Representative

Colossians 1:19 *[God] was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him*

The day of Christ, the day of God

PW Volume 7, p 243 (HT 1767)

2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

Colossians 2:15 *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it*

Jesus, Jehovah, God, / Thou art gone up on high,

PW Volume 7, p 239 (HT 1767)

3. The Cross as Victory

1 Timothy 1:15 *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief*

He will not speak a greater word:.. "The chief of sinners, I!"

UPCW Vol 2, p 469

6. Christian Perfection

1 Timothy 2:3b-4 *God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*

Thee, Jesu, thee, the sinner's friend (v 9, ...He wills that all the fallen race)

PW Vol 2, p 301 (H&SP 1742)

5.1 Christ Died For All

2 Timothy 1:7 *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*

I want the Spir't of power within

H&P 291 (H&SP 1740)

1.4 What are the Sources?

Hebrews 1:3 *When he had by himself purged our sins*
 Saviour from sin, I wait to prove / That Jesus is thy healing name
 (v 2, Answer that gracious end in me) 6. Christian Perfection
H&P 747 (H&SP 1742)

Hebrews 2:9 *That he [Jesus] by the grace of God should taste death for every man*
 For every man he tasted death, /He suffered once for all
H&SP 1740 5.1 Christ Died For All

Hebrews 4:14 *Seeing then that we have a great high priest*
 Jesus is my great High-priest, Who doth in heaven appear
PW Vol 9, p 36 (SH 1762, on Exodus 4:10) 4.3 Intercession

Hebrews 4:15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*
 We have not an High-priest above (v 3, ...Abandoned by his angry God)
PW Vol 13 pp 126-127 (SH 1762) 2.1 Wesley and Substitution
 4.The Priesthood of Christ

Hebrews 4:15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*
 O the grace on man bestowed!
 (v 3, Our High-priest in heaven he lives) 2.3 Christ our Representative
UPCW Vol 3, p 193

Hebrews 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*
 And can it be, that I should gain / An interest in the Saviour's blood
 (v 5, No condemnation now I dread) 5.2 The Holy Spirit
H&P 216 (H&SP 1739)

Hebrews 8:1 *We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*
 O filial Deity, Accept my new-born cry!
 (v 7...Still thou stand'st before the throne) 5.1 Christ Died For All
PW Vol 1, pp 97-99 (H&SP 1739) 4.3 Intercession

Hebrews 8:1 *We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*
 See where before the throne he stands
PW Vol 7, p 276 (SH 1762) 4.3 Intercession

Hebrews 8:1 *We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*
 See where our great High Priest (v 3, The promptings of our Head)
H&P 622 (HoLS 1745) 2.3 Christ As Representative

Hebrews 9:12 *He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*
 Entered the holy place above / Covered with meritorious scars
MHB 232, PW Vol 13, p 140 (SH 1762) 4. The Priesthood of Christ
 4.3 Intercession

Hebrews 9:12 *He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*
 Victim divine, thy grace we claim
 (orig v 4, He still respects thy sacrifice) 4. The Priesthood of Christ
H&P 629 (HoLS 1745) 4.2 Sacrifice

Hebrews 9:13-14 *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*
Hail, Jesus, hail, our great High-Priest (v 2, The blood of goats and bullocks)
PW Vol 4, p 157 (first published 1746) 6. Christian Perfection

Hebrews 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ...purge your conscience from dead works*
O Jesus my Hope/ For me offered up
(v 3, And purge my foul conscience) 4.4 Blood
PW Vol 4 p 365 (H&SP 1749) 6. Christian Perfection

Hebrews 10:4 *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*
O thou, whose offering on the tree (v 2, The blood of goats and bullocks slain)
PW Vol 3, p 307 (HoLS 1745) 4.2 Sacrifice

Hebrews 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God*
Thy soul, for sin an offering made, /Hath cleansed this guilty soul of mine
PW Volume 5, p 148 (H&SP 1749) 3. The Cross as Ransom

Hebrews 10:22 *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*
Wherewith, O God, shall I draw near
(verse 8, Jesus, the Lamb of God hath bled)
(verse 3, Can these avert the wrath of God) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-
PW Volume 7, p 276 (SH 1762) singing in Methodism

Hebrews 10:22 *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*
Wherewith, O God, shall I draw near
(verse 8, Jesus, the Lamb of God hath bled, and Can these avert the wrath of God)
(verse 3, Can these avert the wrath of God) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-
PW Volume 7, p 276 (SH 1762) singing in Methodism

Hebrews 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*
Author of faith, to thee I cry, /To thee, who wouldst not have me die
PW Vol 4, p 224 (H&SP 1749) 5.4 Christ our Righteousness

Hebrews 12:24 *And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel -*
The Mediator stands between /An angry God and guilty race
PW Volume 9 p 67 (SH 1762). 2.1 Wesley and Substitution

1 John 1:5:13 *That ye may know that ye have eternal life*
How can a sinner know / His sins on earth forgiven?
(v 2, We who in Christ believe) 5.2 The Holy Spirit
H&P 728 (H&SP 1749) 4.4 Blood

Revelation 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him*
God of all consolation
(verse 7, Him eye to eye we there shall see) 1.3 Experience and Hymn-
PW Volume 4, p 281 (RH 1747) singing in Methodism

Revelation 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him*
Lo, he comes with clouds descending (v 3, The dear tokens of his passion)
H&P 241 (HIAM 1758) 5.3 Experiencing the Cross
7.5 Enduring Achievement

Revelation 1:11 *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*
Jesus, the First and Last, / On thee my soul is cast
H&P 735 (SH 1762) 6. Christian Perfection

Revelation 6:16 *...and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*
Glorious Saviour of my soul (v 5, Yet thy wrath I cannot fear)
PW Volume 3, p 10 (HoGEL 1741) 2.2 Did God Die on the Cross?

Appendix G

Richard Hooker and the Wesleys

Richard Hooker (1554-1600) was born near Exeter and studied at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he became Fellow in 1577. He took Holy Orders in 1581, and in 1584 became rector of Drayton-Beauchamp near Tring. After a lengthy controversy over his appointment as master of the Temple in 1585, he resolved to set forth the basis of Church government, and embarked on his eight-volume work, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. "It is mainly to this work", says *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, "that Anglican theology owes its tone and direction".¹

We do not know how much either Charles or John was consciously influenced by Hooker; so far as I can see, neither mentions Hooker at all in his writings. It is however possible to infer that he had a considerable influence because of the correspondence of thought.

It is, in fact, highly probable that both brothers would have read Hooker. Their father wrote a book, *Advice to a Young Clergyman*, for the benefit of Mr Hoole, his curate at Epworth. When John decided to become ordained it was passed on to him, and published by him in 1735. It contained the words, "Hooker everyone knows, and his strength and firmness can hardly be too much commended; nor is there any danger of his being solidly answered".² It is reasonable to conclude that Charles, too, would have read this book and familiarised himself with Hooker as part of his own preparation for ordination.

1. The Trinity

Hooker held the same doctrine of the Trinity in regard to our salvation as did St Augustine. The latter had written: "Everything is the combined work of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of both, in equal and harmonious activity".³ Hooker says: "Whatsoever God doth work, the hands of all three Persons are jointly and equally in it according to the order of the connection whereby they depend upon other... The Father as Goodness, the Son as Wisdom, the Holy Ghost as Power do all concur in every particular outwardly issuing from that one only glorious Deity in which they all are".⁴ He is, however, careful not to say that the Godhead suffered on

¹ *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, sixth edition, 1997, pp 915-6.

² Samuel Wesley, *Advice to a Young Clergyman*, ed. John Wesley, 1735, p 43.

³ St Augustine, in Henry Bettenson, *The Later Christian Fathers*, OUP 1972, p 220.

⁴ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Everyman Edition, J M Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1954, p 227.

the cross: "By the Lord of Glory we must needs understand the whole person of Christ, who being Lord of Glory, was indeed crucified, but not in that nature for which he is termed the Lord of Glory".⁵ This is the same approach as we find in Charles's hymns: see page 63 above.

2. Hooker and the Atonement

Hooker sees the work of Christ partly as satisfaction, partly as ransom, and partly as sacrifice.

2.1 Atonement as satisfaction

In Chapter 7.2, where I compared Charles Wesley with Anselm, I quoted (in a footnote) Hooker's brief statement below as "thoroughly Anselmic":

Seeing that sin against God eternal and infinite must needs be an infinite wrong; justice in regard thereof doth necessarily exact an infinite recompense, or else inflict upon the offeror infinite punishment. Now because God was thus to be satisfied, and man not able to make satisfaction in such sort, his unspeakable love and inclination to save mankind from eternal death ordained on our behalf a Mediator, to do that which had been for any other impossible. Wherefore all sin is remitted in the only faith of Christ's passion, and no man without belief thereof justified.⁶

Hooker also wrote (as against the Roman Catholic position): "Christ alone hath satisfied and appeased his Father's wrath: Christ hath merited salvation alone".⁷ Hooker's doctrine is therefore on all fours with Charles Wesley's, though it was common enough for the similarity to be coincidental.

2.2 Atonement as Ransom and Sacrifice

Hooker writes:

If Christ have paid a ransom for all, even for her [the Blessed Virgin Mary], it followeth, that all without exception were captives. If one have died for all, all were dead, dead in sin; all sinful, therefore none absolutely righteous in themselves; but we are absolutely righteous in Christ..."Christ is made unto us wisdom, justice, sanctification, and redemption;" wisdom, because he hath offered himself a sacrifice for sin; sanctification, because he hath given us of his Spirit; redemption, because he hath appointed a day to vindicate his children out of the bands of corruption into liberty which is glorious.⁸

Here are two themes of the atonement congenial to Charles: ransom (but without any attempt to elaborate, as might be done in Origen's theory), and sacrifice. We can notice also that John described as his "favourite topic" the text "Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness [justice], sanctification and redemption".⁹ On the other hand, sanct-

⁵ *Ib* p 211.

⁶ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book VI, Keble 1888 edition, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p 71.

⁷ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Everyman Edition, J M Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1954, p 64.

⁸ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Everyman Edition, J M Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1954, p 16.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 1:30 (John's "righteousness" corresponds to KJV). See page 145 above.

ification is coupled with the Spirit only, and not with the atonement as well, as Charles urged so strongly.

2.3 Atonement as intercession

The concept of the atonement as intercession, which appealed to Charles Wesley as it did to the writer to the Hebrews, has been largely neglected. Michael Winter, in his recent book *The Atonement*, sees the death of Jesus as his intercession for the whole human race, a pleading with which we are to identify ourselves; but he admits that:

This field has been almost totally neglected by modern writers. I know of only one author who touches on the matter: R S Wallace, *The Atoning Death of Christ*, Westchester, Illinois, 1981, devotes two paragraphs to it in passing (p 124), citing Hooker's *Laws*, V, 51.¹⁰

The passage referred to runs as follows:

And as Christ took manhood that by it he might be capable of death whereunto he humbled himself, so because manhood is the proper subject of compassion and feeling pity, which maketh the sceptre of Christ's regency even in the kingdom of heaven amiable, he which without our nature could not on earth suffer for the sins of the world, doth now also by means thereof both make intercession to God for sinners and exercise domain over all men with a true, a natural, and a sensible touch of mercy.¹¹

2.4 Atonement: Experiencing the Cross

When Wesley wrote "The [now *those*] dear tokens of his passion, Still his dazzling body bears"¹² did he have in mind the words of Hooker: "Yea in this respect the very glorified body of Christ retained in it the scars and marks of former mortality"?¹³

3. Predestination

Hooker speaks of election, but not reprobation, and his mention of foreknowledge may have influenced John Wesley's view that foreknowledge (of our response to grace) preceded election:

Through him [Christ], according to the eternal purpose of God before the foundation of the world, born, crucified, buried, raised, &c, we were in a gracious acceptation known to God long before we were seen of men: God knew us, loved us, was kind to us in Christ Jesus, in him we were elected to be heirs of life.¹⁴

4. Authority: Scripture, Tradition and Reason

Hooker has traditionally been regarded as "a champion of reason", and for that reason a

¹⁰ Michael Winter, *The Atonement*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1995, p 114.

¹¹ Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V, ¶ 51. I have modernised the spelling somewhat.

¹² *H&P* 241(3) (*HIAM* 1758).

¹³ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Everyman Edition, J M Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1954, p 217.

¹⁴ *ib.*, p 60.

“theologian of the *via media*”, though the latter phrase derives from Newman, who later conceded that it was “an impossible idea”.¹⁵ Reason is, nevertheless, a prominent aspect of his theology; he sees a close relationship between grace and nature, reason and revelation, and attacks the biblicism of the Puritans, who demanded a scriptural warrant for every action.¹⁶ He nevertheless holds to the supremacy of scripture, which he places above tradition. Tradition remains an authority, because it is wrong for the Church to change anything in its tradition unless there is an unquestioned revelation or it is clear to the Church as a whole that its practice has been wrong.¹⁷ For instance, he argued for the retention of episcopacy on the basis that it had existed in the Church for “a thousand five hundred years and upward”.¹⁸

There are similarities here to the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” (see Chapter 1, page 24). However, Hooker says little or nothing about experience, probably because the Puritans had used their personal revelations to create laws which they saw as binding on the Church as a whole.¹⁹

Hooker saw the Old Testament as relevant in so far as it points to Christ, as against those (Puritans and their followers, in other words) who found in the Law a continuing validity for Christians.²⁰ We have seen in Chapter 1 that Charles Wesley is a Christologiser of the Old Testament.

5. Sanctification

Hooker’s *Laws* was in part an attack on the Puritans for a theology which was biblicist and legalistic, out of harmony with the real genius of Christianity. The solution was to restore the Incarnation to its central position in theology, and on this issue he turned away from Reformed to Catholic theology.²¹ He uses the Catholic phrase *deification of man*,²² and in doing so follows Irenaeus, Clement, Athanasius and the main current of Greek theology.²³

¹⁵ See the foreword by Alister McGrath in Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker And the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1997, pp xiii and 1.

¹⁶ Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker And the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1997, p 17.

¹⁷ *ib.*, p 53.

¹⁸ *ib.*, p 131.

¹⁹ *ib.*, (e.g. p 104).

²⁰ This theme is explored by Nigel Atkinson in *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1997, pp 78-117.

²¹ L S Thornton, *Richard Hooker: A Study of his Theology*, SPCK London, 1924, pp 58ff.

²² *Works ii*, 235.

²³ L S Thornton, *Richard Hooker: A Study of his Theology*, SPCK London, 1924, p 68.

For, he says:

Sith God hath deified our nature, though not by turning it into himself, yet by making it his own inseparable habitation, we cannot conceive how God should without man either exercise divine power, or receive the glory of divine praise. For man is in both an associate of Deity.²⁴

Like the Wesleys, he saw sanctification as partly by imputation and partly by infusion:

Thus we participate Christ partly by imputation, as when these things which he did and suffered for us are imputed unto us for righteousness; partly by habitual and real infusion, as when grace is inwardly bestowed while we are on earth, and afterward more fully both our souls and bodies made like unto his in glory. The first thing of his so infused into our hearts is the Spirit of Christ...²⁵

We should however note that (as against Charles, and as already noted) sanctification is by the Spirit rather than by the Spirit and the cross, and (as against John) that there is no hint of instant sanctification in this life.

6. Sacraments: the Eucharist

Sacraments, said Hooker, “serve as the instruments of God”.²⁶ He does not deny the real presence, but he relates it primarily to the faithful communicant rather than the elements of bread and wine.²⁷ We are reminded of Charles’s lines:

Effectual let the tokens prove
And made, by heavenly art,
Fit channels to convey thy love
To every faithful heart.²⁸

To every faithful soul appear,
And show thy real presence here!²⁹

7. The Church: Episcopacy

Hooker regarded episcopal ordination as “the ordinary institution of God”, but acknowledged that examples of occasional “exigence of necessity” made it impossible to urge that “without exception” ordinations required “a lineal descent of power from the Apostles by continued succession of Bishops”.³⁰ Frank Baker thinks that John Wesley found support for his own controversial American ordinations in Hooker.³¹

²⁴ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Everyman Edition, J M Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1954, p 216.

²⁵ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Everyman Edition, J M Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1954, p 232.

²⁶ *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes and John Booty, SPCK/Fortress Press, London, 1988, p 71.

²⁷ *Ib*, p 274; *Laws* V, lxvii K)

²⁸ *H&P* 602(2), “Come, Holy Ghost, thine influence shed” (*HoLS* 1745).

²⁹ *H&P* 629(3), “Victim divine, thy grace we claim” (*HoLS* 1745).

³⁰ *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes and John Booty, SPCK/Fortress Press, London, 1988, pp 17 and 26.

³¹ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, Epworth Press, London, 1970, p p 64-5.